

THE TIMES

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Best-value mortgage guide
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SPORT'S NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS
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SPECIAL TRAVEL ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE

THE SATURDAY TIMES - YOUR COMPLETE SEVEN DAYS GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND

Jack Straw tells of a father's pain

Judge rules son can be named over drugs

By Andrew Pierce
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JACK STRAW, the Home Secretary, spoke last night for the first time about the shock and pain of discovering his teenage son had been accused of drug dealing after the gagging order on identifying the minister and his son was lifted.

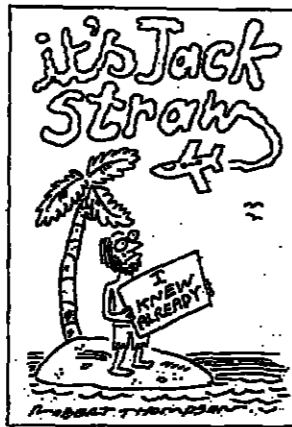
Mr Straw, one of Tony Blair's closest friends and an implacable opponent of the legalisation of soft drugs, appeared at a hastily arranged press conference at the Home Office only minutes after a judge ruled that he and his son could be named.

He said that while he was "embarrassed" by the episode, he had never contemplated resignation from his post, which includes responsibility for youth crime and drugs policy. The experience had hardened his conviction that the ban should stay in place.

The Home Secretary said that his son, William, expected no favours from the legal system but should not be made to suffer because his father was a prominent politician.

A decision by the Crown Prosecution Service on whether to charge the teenager will be announced next week amid speculation that it will back a police recommendation to take no further action or only caution the youngster.

Mr Straw had indicated over the past few days his intense frustration at being ordered to stay silent because of the age of his son and the injunction obtained by the Attorney-General. At the press conference he expressed his relief that he could at last speak out about the events of



and I am aware of the pressures they are under and the parents of teenage children are under. I have always sought — and so have my colleagues — to conduct our family lives the same way as other people. These are experiences that other families have had and so it does not in any way affect my ability to talk on these matters.

Mr Straw said that his son had voluntarily accompanied him to a police station on the afternoon of the Monday before Christmas, only minutes after he had faced questions in the House of Commons as Home Secretary.

"I did what I thought was the sensible and the appropriate thing to do, which was to propose to my son that we went to the police. No 10 has made clear that the Prime Minister has expressed support for the action I had taken," he said.

With a court case in prospect, Mr Straw declined to discuss the rights and wrong of the *Mirror* investigation or to speculate on his son's alleged involvement with drugs.

However, he was privately appalled when two newspapers in Scotland published his name yesterday when the press in England were denied the right. The Government was further embarrassed by the fact that continental newspapers, on sale in London, contained Mr Straw's name.

These disclosures led Mr Justice Toulson to rule in chambers yesterday that the identities of Mr Straw and his 17-year-old son could be disclosed.

Tough talk, page 2
Leading article, page 23



Jack Straw, giving a press conference last night. He said he was embarrassed but had not thought of resigning

Holiday misery for young high-flyer

By Daniel McGrory

CHRISTMAS and New Year has been a miserable time for William Straw, despite receiving the offer of a place at Oxford University on Christmas Eve.

By then, the 17-year-old had already been "grounded" by his father, Jack Straw. The Home Secretary said that his son was thoroughly astounded at the embarrassment he had caused his family.

A brush with the law would be unlikely to jeopardise a sixth-former's chances of a place at Oxford, sources at the university said yesterday. Oxford never divulges the names of its applicants but, once made, an offer would only be rescinded under exceptional circumstances.

The young William is said to have had a reputation as a "swot" among his peers, but to have branched out socially in the sixth form.

William Straw first hit the headlines when his father fell foul of Labour activists by choosing to send him to the fashionable Pimlico School in Westminster, rather than to a secondary school near his Lambeth home.

The 1300-pupil comprehensive, where Jack Straw subsequently became chairman of governors, has served William well.

Known as one of the school's brightest academic stars, he took A-level mathematics a year early and is now taking politics, physics and religious studies. He will read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford if his A-level results are up to scratch.

HARD MAN 38
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INSIDE
Me@g
Great new comic
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Revised The Times's overseas editions: Australia \$2.50, Belgium 8 Francs 110, Canada \$3.50, Cyprus P6 325, Denmark 18.00, Finland 18.00, France 18.00, Germany DM 4.50, Gibraltar 90p, Greece by air 400, Netherlands F1 6.50, Italy L 4.50, Luxembourg LI 100, Madeira Esc 350, Malta 45c, Monaco DM 40.00, Norway Kr 20.00, Portugal esc 350, Spain P 325, Sweden Skr 35.00, Switzerland S Fr 3.50, Tunisia Din 3.200, USA \$3.50.

Frank Muir, veteran comedy writer, dies

By Mark Henderson

FRANK Muir, the comedy writer and broadcaster, whose career in radio and television spanned 50 years, died yesterday aged 77.

Muir, who published his memoirs three months ago, died at his home in Egham, Surrey.

A few hours earlier he had watched the Oscar-winning film *Forrest Gump* on television and commended the script, his wife Polly said. "We watched the film together and he thoroughly enjoyed it," she said. "He maintained an interest in comedy writing to the end." She said that the cause of death was not yet clear.

Famous for his trademark pink bow-tie, bushy moustache and rich voice, Muir was one of the pioneers of radio comedy, sharing a successful partnership with Denis Norden for a quarter of a century. Introduced in 1947, the pair co-wrote the landmark radio series *Take It From Here*. Later they launched the long-running panel games *My Word!* and *My Music*.

After a string of successful radio hits he wrote *Whack-O!* for television in 1958, starring



Muir: "one of the best comedy brains"

Jimmy Edwards, and went on to become assistant head of light entertainment for the BBC. He later became one of the team captains on the television panel game *Call My Bluff*. Mr Norden said: "Frank was much more than a partner. 'We were closer than most brothers for 50 years. We telephoned each other three times a week. He had one of the best comedy brains I have known — but his humour was based on kindness.'"

Obituary, page 25

Balloonist Fossett flies into a storm

By Bill Hoffmann and James Bone in New York

GALES of more than 90mph, which are expected to cause widespread damage across Britain today, could spell doom for the American millionaire making his fourth attempt to fly non-stop around the world in a hot-air balloon.

Last night Steve Fossett was preparing to take evasive action to avoid the latest in a series of devastating winter storms that have plagued Britain since Christmas and are expected to last through the weekend.

His gleaming silver balloon, *Solo Spirit*, was due to pass across southern England around 3am today.

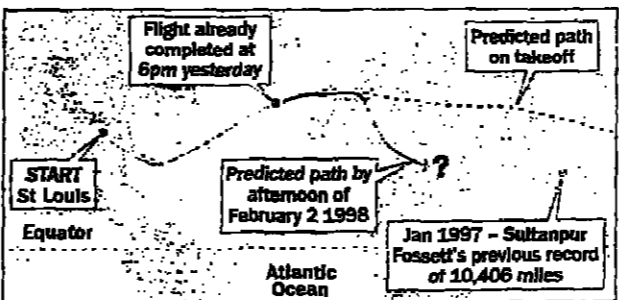
Mr Fossett, who took off from St Louis in the American Midwest on New Year's Eve, caught a branch of the polar

jetstream over the Atlantic yesterday and was hurtling along at 140mph — almost double his earlier speed.

The daredevil stock-options trader, who has previously swum the English channel and competed in the trans-Alaska dog-sled race, was flying at 22,000ft, but was ready to go higher to miss Britain's storms. "He does have a chance to encounter some of these conditions, but they are going to do all they can to make sure he avoids them," said Fred Volkmann at Solo Spirit's Mission Control at Washington University in St Louis. "Steve Fossett is not going to be intimidated by

Continued on page 2, col 5

Forecast, page 32



'Copperfingers' accused of fraud

Charles Vincent, the commodities trader known as Copperfingers, and the Winchester Commodities Group he founded are being sued for damages and compensation for their part in an alleged fraud of Codelco, the Chilean copper company that claims to have been cheated out of about \$175 million (£107 million). Page 27

More parents choose Diana

The number of babies named Diana rose markedly in the weeks after the death of the Princess of Wales.

For most of last year an average of three babies a month were named Diana but in September the number was 29. Diana remained outside the top 50 girls' names for 1997, however. Page 20

Celtic win the Old Firm derby

Second-half goals from Craig Burley and Paul Lambert gave Celtic a 2-0 win over Rangers in the Old Firm derby at Celtic Park, lifting them to within a point of their Glasgow rivals and level with Hearts at the top of the Scottish premier division. Page 33

Oxbridge learns how to exploit its good name

By David Charter
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

HAVING spent 900 years establishing a brand name for education, Oxford and Cambridge Universities are preparing to exploit the full potential of their label.

The Cambridge bicycle and Cambridge tea, the latter produced by a graduate on his own plantation, are

being launched worldwide in the drive to raise funds. Not to be outdone, Oxford has commissioned its own bicycle and launched *Oxford Whisky* for the Christmas market in Japan.

The Government's review of the £35 million college fee, which pressures Oxford and Cambridge's small group teaching, has added urgency to the search for alternative sources of income. Mike Smithson, development

director at Cambridge, said the university was lending its crest to increasing numbers of products. His office raised £25 million last year and merchandising plays a growing part.

Cambridge was among the first universities to introduce a credit card for alumni, which brings in £100,000 a year. The range of products now on offer even includes a cheap-rate telephone service.

Oxford Ltd has its own shop with an annual turnover of £250,000 in the city's High Street. Rachel Nickerson, marketing and development manager, said it had high hopes for the £250 Oxford bicycle, a Raleigh with a blue disc in the back wheel featuring the university crest.

In the coming year, Cambridge is considering scientific toys such as microscopes and telescopes.

Get thin, learn French,
get solvent, quit smoking,
learn to cook, have less hangovers,
write a novel, eat less meat,
make more friends, win an Oscar,
start tango lessons, remember
to Ross, decorate bedroom,
don't get an overdraft,
keep the lawn mowed,
buy a convertible,
learn the piano,
go swimming,
write a will,
phone mum.

Sort out Pension.

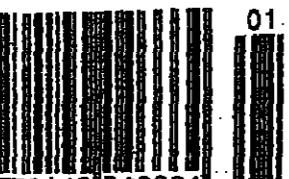
If this list gives you a sense of déjà vu, take the first step — with at least one of your resolutions and call this number.

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RAGE



TODAY IN THE TIMES



Is Harriet's future written in the stars?

Politics and astrology Page 7



Mia Farrow's new role: Woody's mother-in-law

New York diary Page 18



Hollywood's billion dollar blockbusters

Hits you shouldn't miss Page 21

Embarrassment as the tough talk comes home to roost

Jack Straw has spoken vehemently about parental responsibility and the need for zero tolerance

By NICHOLAS WATT POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE MINISTER

JACK Straw, who has marked himself out as the Cabinet's most vehement opponent of legalising cannabis, has suffered an embarrassment but not a career-threatening blow from the alleged behaviour of his son.

As Home Secretary, Mr Straw pioneered the Government's uncompromising approach to law and order and unveiled a series of initiatives tackling youth crime and emphasising the importance of parental responsibility.

The unfortunate parallels between Mr Straw's son and the youths singled out for Government attention have been compounded by Mr Straw's habit of mixing the personal with the political. Throughout his career Mr Straw has illustrated political points with humiliations drawn from his own life.

Since his appointment as Shadow Home Secretary Mr Straw has made abundantly clear that he is determined to bury Tony claims that Labour is soft on crime. Under a "zero tolerance" policy, he is waging a personal crusade against the blight of youth crime in his Crime and Disorder Bill and has threatened parents of unruly children with fines.

Summing up his approach, he said: "This is about implementing a zero-tolerance strategy. It is giving the power back to the people in law-abiding communities and undermining and disrupting the gangs, the drug dealers, the criminal families."

Opponents who complain that Mr Straw has developed a tough stance on law and order to prove his credentials to middle-England voters is given short shrift. The Home Secretary can point out that his opposition to legalising drugs dates back to his student days in the 1960s. Despite the heady atmosphere at the time Mr Straw campaigned against drugs at Leeds University and, as president of the

National Union of Students, devised the distinctly suburban slogan "Respected, but not respectable".

Mr Straw, who is a personal friend of Tony Blair, was chosen by the Prime Minister to chair the Government's ministerial group on the family and parenting. Of all Labour's media-savvy Cabinet ministers Jack Straw stands out for his habit of mixing the personal with politics. Anyone complaining about the Home Secretary's harsh stance against noisy neighbours should blame the Swindell family, who terrorised the young Mr Straw on his Essex council estate in the 1960s.

Mr Straw re-opened old wounds in 1995 when he related the misery of living next door to the five Swindell children and their "loud-mouthed" mother on a council estate in Loughton. At one point the 13-year-old Mr Straw stood up in court to defend his mother, Jean, a local school teacher, when she and Mrs Swindell faced counter charges of assault. A furious Mrs Swindell hit back at Mr Straw after his 1995 interview, dismissing him as a "little toffee-nosed boy nobody wanted to play with".

With his experiences in mind Mr Straw drew up a series of proposals to crack down on such neighbours. On his first visit to a prison as Home Secretary an inmate committed suicide in his cell, prompting Mr Straw to recall the suicide of a classmate at school. The new Home Secretary said that suicide was an experience which had remained with him. It was a reference to Peter Hartley, 15, who had gassed himself in May 1963 at Brentwood School.

Mr Straw gave a moving account of the suicide of the teenager, who was agonising over his homosexuality. In *The Times* in 1994, he said: "His



Scotland learnt the Minister's identity before England thanks to the Daily Record and The Scotsman

death has lived with me to this day. Partly I have felt great sadness about the waste of a talented young life and the pain of his parents, which I am sure never healed."

Mr Straw has been intensely political since his days on the Essex council estate. He joined the first Aldermaston ban-the-bomb march in April 1959 at the age of 12 and was only 13 when he made his first political speech at a Labour candidate's adoption meeting.

After his career as a student political leader Mr Straw went to the Inns of Court School of Law, and in the 1970s practised as a criminal barrister. He first came to prominence when he became personal adviser to the then Social Services Secretary, Barbara Castle, and to the then Environment Secretary, Peter Shore. In 1979 he succeeded Baroness Castle as MP for Blackburn. It took 18 years for Mr Straw to fulfill the prediction by his former mentor that he would make it to the Cabinet.

Leading article, page 23



Scotland learnt the Minister's identity before England thanks to the Daily Record and The Scotsman

Pressure to lift ban grew after naming in Scotland

By DANIEL MCGRORY

HOW IT HAPPENED

THE pressure to lift the ban on naming Jack Straw intensified after his name and picture were splashed across the front pages of Scotland's daily newspapers and his identity was revealed in a slip-up on BBC television news.

Editors and politicians were in agreement that the injunction had to be lifted after newspapers and radio stations in Ireland and France also gave his name.

Hours before Judge Toulson lifted the injunction, a slip of the tongue by a television correspondent meant that three million viewers of BBC's 24-hour news channel in England and Wales knew who the minister was. Millions more on the West Coast could have tuned into RTE - the Irish radio station - and heard his name.

Thursday December 11: The Mirror's investigative reporter, Dawn Alford, received a tip-off from an anonymous caller. Dec 13: She meets 17-year-old William Straw and three friends in a South London pub who allegedly supplies Miss Alford with £10 of cannabis resin. Dec 15: A laboratory test confirms it is 1.92 grammes of cannabis resin. Dec 20: Mirror editor, Piers Morgan, telephones Mr Straw at his London home. The minister asks for time to talk to his son and Cabinet colleagues. Dec 22: Mr Straw accompanies his son to police station to make a voluntary statement. William is released on police bail. Dec 24: The Mirror reveals its story but does not name Mr Straw.

Christmas Day: The Prime Minister insists there is no question of the then unnamed minister resigning. Dec 27: The solicitor acting for Mr Straw warns editors of risk of contempt of court. Dec 30: Attorney-General obtains a High Court injunction. January 1: Mr Straw tells two newspapers he is "frustrated" that he cannot reveal his name on legal advice. Jan 2: Seven Scottish newspapers, one in Ireland and France, several radio stations and a slip-up by BBC News 24 reveals the name.

Both Radio Clyde in Glasgow and Radio Forth in Edinburgh said they had sought technical advice that listeners across the border could not pick up their station. The BBC in Scotland did not reveal the name in case it was picked up in England, nor did independent radio stations close to the border. Scottish newspaper editors insisted that the law in England which bans the identifying of alleged offenders under 18 does not apply in Scotland. The Scottish Daily Mail said its decision followed Mr Straw's public statement that he wishes the secrecy surrounding his identity to be lifted. The Scotsman said it took

the decision "to end the farce that was fast becoming a disgrace to our public life, our freedom of speech and our democracy".

Politicians were swift to seize on the growing farce that half the country knew the name while the rest telephoned friends in Scotland to find out. Roger Gale, vice-chairman of the Tory media sub-committee in the Commons, said: "It is ludicrous that one part of the United Kingdom, because of a quirk in the law, is able to publish the name that virtually everybody in public knows."

The Liberal Democrat MP Menzies Campbell said no "sensible" purpose had been served by concealment.

The Scottish newspapers denied they were working together to force publication across the United Kingdom. One senior Scottish executive said: "The only advantage is if one goes to jail we all go so we will be in good company."

The French paper France Soir, which was on sale in London and other cities, carried a photograph of Mr Straw and criticised the withholding of his identity as "typical British hypocrisy".

Identity was unknown to man who made ruling

By DANIEL MCGRORY

THE JUDGE



Toulson: wrote book on confidentiality

MR JUSTICE TOULSON, who ruled that the minister could be named, was said by barristers last night not to have known the identity himself when he went to the High Court yesterday.

The 51-year-old Cambridge-educated judge is the author of a legal text book on confidentiality and was appointed to the Queen's Bench Division in 1996. He is described by colleagues as "calm and very sharp witted".

He is married with two sons and two daughters and was knighted in 1996. Before being appointed a judge his legal practice was in insurance matters and personal injuries. He went to Mill Hill school and Jesus College Cambridge and he was called to the Bar in 1969. He became a QC in 1986 and in the same year was appointed a Recorder.

He published his book, *The Law on Confidentiality* in 1996 and in *Who's Who* lists his recreations as skiing, tennis and gardening. He was among the Appeal Court judges who last month rejected

ed a plea from the disgraced Lord Brocket, to have his five-year sentence for a £4.2 million insurance fraud reduced.

In February 1997 Mr Justice Toulson was appointed to be a Presiding Judge of the West-ern Circuit from October 1, 1997 to December 2001. In March 1997 he presided over the appeal case when a musician disfigured in the King's Cross Underground fire sought £1 million damages.

Kwasi Mintah, who was an illegal immigrant at the time of the fire in November 1987 had turned down a £350,000 compensation deal. Mr Justice Toulson awarded him £110,427 damages. But because it was less than the amount offered by London Regional Transport he had to meet their legal expenses.

As a barrister in 1987 he represented Luton Town in a conflict over FA Cup ties on its artificial pitch.

Balloon ride 'time of my life'

Continued from page 1 weather conditions." Fossett was reported as saying he was having the time of his life. "Everything is going very well. I'm convinced we're going to make it," he told his support team in a radio message late yesterday, shrugging off all suggestions of failure. Yesterday as the first of the high winds hit mainland Brit-

ain, an elderly couple and their five-year-old granddaughter from Cirencester, Gloucestershire were killed when their Skoda Favorit crashed head-on into a Fiat Punto on the A433 at Rodmarton.

Others casualties of the weather included three people injured when their Cessna 421 plane was forced to crash on a

road leading to the home of Cilla Black, the television personality, in Denham, Bucks. The winds resulted in flooding of motorways and small roads from southern England to the Midlands. Several routes in Dorset, including stretches of the busy Blandford to Poole road, were said to be in up to a foot of water.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council officer jailed for fraud

An executive with a public health authority siphoned off almost £40,000 to help pay for a holiday villa in Spain, a court was told yesterday.

When Malcolm Smith was exposed, he used lies and false paperwork to cover his tracks, delaying his arrest for more than three years. Smith, 57, director of estates management and supplies at Barnsley Health Authority in South Yorkshire, had denied nine charges of procuring the execution of a valuable security by deception. He also denied a charge of misconduct while a public officer but was found guilty at a trial last month. Yesterday he was jailed for 30 months.

Woman drank herself to death

The daughter of a former MP, the late Ted Fletcher, drank herself to death, an inquest was told. Sally Fletcher, 38, of Darlington, died in hospital on Sunday after being found collapsed at home. A post-mortem examination showed her death was due to cardiac failure and pneumonia linked to malnutrition. The South Durham Coroner recorded a verdict of self-neglect.

Grief brings actress home

The actress Kate Winslet missed the Hollywood premiere of her latest film *Titanic* to attend the funeral in England of a former boyfriend, who she said was "the incredible love of my life". Actor and writer Stephen Tredre, who died of bone cancer aged 22, met Miss Winslet now 22, when she was 15 on the set of a BBC drama. They later shared a flat but split up three years ago.

Hit-and-run woman dies

A woman in her eighties was killed in a hit-and-run incident in Newark, Nottinghamshire. The woman died at the scene but the car, a red Ford Sierra, sped off with a broken windscreen and suspected smashed front light and number plate. Police said that three people are believed to have been inside the vehicle. The dead woman has not yet been named.

Burglars in the frame

Police have found videotapes made by burglars of more than 30 crimes being committed. The tapes, which were edited, subtitled and dubbed with music, showed burglaries, vandalism and breaking and entering. Police in Tamworth, Staffordshire, found them while investigating another matter and the tapes aroused suspicions. Two men have been jailed.

Spiked drink rape inquiry

A woman who was raped near a central London nightclub last week may have been given a drink spiked by her assailant. Officers are investigating the possibility that the woman, 20, was fed Rohypnol, which renders women unable to resist attack. She was raped after leaving the Rumburbar club, where she told police she had accepted a drink that made her feel ill.

Yoghurt makes homes tasteful

Developers of a new estate are to paint the houses with a mixture of yoghurt, milk and soot to encourage mould and lichen, which will make the properties look old. Leeds councillors have approved the plan borrowed from the horticultural world, where plant containers are often smeared with yoghurt to attract mould and give a weather-beaten appearance.

Times Magazine

An incorrect date appears on the front cover of today's *Magazine*: it should read January 3, 1998.

Advertisement for First Direct bank services, including a table of account charges and contact information.

Advertisement for First Direct bank services, listing various benefits like 24-hour banking, no fees, and easy bill payments.

Advertisement for Times Magazine, featuring a large image of a man's face and promotional text.

Anthea Turner leaves husband

TV's golden girl has fallen for a married father of three and separated from Peter Powell, who is also her agent, reports Katherine Knight

THE marriage between Anthea Turner, the television presenter, and her manager husband Peter Powell, regarded as one of the most successful in showbusiness, has ended after eight years.

In a statement issued by the media solicitor Mark Stephens yesterday, Ms Turner, 37, said the couple had separated. She is now in a relationship with Grant Povey, a filmmaker a married father of three.

She emphasised the split was amicable but apologised for the hurt she may have caused. In the same statement Mr Powell, 46, who propelled his wife into the top league of television earners, said he was "deeply saddened" by the split but realised he had to "let her go".

News of their separation will come as a surprise to those who thought the Turner-Powell marriage was the perfect complement to Ms Turner's girl-next-door appeal. When the couple first met, she had been living with one of his best friends, the Radio 1 DJ Bruno Brookes.

While in the last few years she has been the public face of the relationship, earning millions as the face of the National Lottery and GMTV, her husband worked tirelessly behind the scenes running a highly successful management company and negotiating lucrative contracts for her.

The picture of domestic contentment appeared to be complete when, 18 months ago, Ms Turner left her £300,000 GMTV post, saying she wanted to spend more time with her husband and hinting they were ready to start a family.

Even as recently as two months ago, Ms Turner gave an interview to the *Sun* saying she felt "sexier than ever" and calling Mr Powell a "lucky man".

But in the lengthy statement issued to the press yesterday, Ms Turner said that while the couple had started out as

lovers, work had become their "abiding passion" and she had now embarked on a relationship with Mr Povey.

"What has happened between Grant and me was borne out of circumstance and our emotional response to it has been beyond the control of either of us," she said.

She added: "The breakdown of a warm and loving marriage is too high a price to pay for apparent success."

In the same statement, Mr Powell said he would continue to love his wife. "She will always have my support. I am deeply saddened at what has occurred, but I want Anthea to have a happy and fulfilling life and in these circumstances, unhappily but understandably, I have to recognise that I must let her go."

Ms Turner is leaving the £1.5 million, five-bedroom home where the couple live in Richmond, southwest London, to film on location for the next few months. It was at Signal Radio, a Stoke station, where Ms

she first met Mr Powell, who had made his name as a Radio 1 Disc jockey and teenage pin-up. He had just given up spinning records to carve out a new career as a showbusiness manager and agent. The couple married within a few months in a lavish ceremony in a picturesque village near the Ms Turner's family home in Stoke-on-Trent.

Later, Mr Powell admitted that a few weeks after the marriage, the couple sat down and planned their careers with military precision and compared the marketing of his wife to selling a car.

In just a few years, Ms Turner had vaulted from her VJ job to a £30,000 job presenting *Blue Peter*. In July 1994 she was given a £300,000 contract to co-host GMTV with Eamonn Holmes and within four months, her husband had secured for her the lucrative slot as the face of the National Lottery.

By spring last year she was being hailed as the highest paid female personality in television after Cilla Black. She now works on the holiday programme *Wish You Were Here* and is understood to have a number of other projects in the pipeline.

Mr Powell meanwhile has turned his management company, the James Grant Media Group, which he co-owns with Russ Lindsay, a former DJ colleague and husband of the broadcaster Caron Keating, into a financial success, with his half share worth an estimated £5 million.

He counts Philip Schofield, Darren Day, Simon Mayo and Zoe Ball among his clients. Last night Mr Stephens confirmed that Ms Turner's career will continue to be managed by the James Grant Media Group and that the couple would remain friends.

Mr Povey, who lives in West Sussex, is the video and film executive behind a takeover move for Nottingham Forest Football Club. It is believed



Peter Powell and Anthea Turner at their 1990 wedding. They planned their careers with military precision

the couple may have met when Ms Turner provided the voiceover for a promotional video he made to help his takeover bid. Mr Povey is also behind the companies Watershed Pictures, Northstar Multimedia and Monumental

Pictures. In yesterday's statement he said: "The trauma of the breakdown of the relationship with my wife has brought great sadness to my family. I am no different to any other father - I love my children deeply and am most concerned that in these circumstances they are both settled and supported and that the inevitable media coverage should cause them as little emotional hurt as possible."

At the family home his wife Della refused to comment. Ms Turner's parents, who last year praised their daughter's happy marriage, were also too upset to comment last night.

Russ Lindsay, Ms Turner's manager, said: "Finishing they do not want it to end acrimoniously."

While they had started out as lovers, work had become their abiding passion

Turner first entered the world of broadcasting. Employed initially as a record librarian, she quickly caught the attention of the station's chiefs, was promoted to a public relations role and had her first taste of broadcasting. She was 24 when she and Bruno Brookes moved to London.

While she is now one of the highest paid women in television she was still a fledgling television presenter, working as a video jockey on Sky, when

SHOWBUSINESS WOMEN WHOSE MEN GAVE THEM A HELPING HAND TO FAME



Twigg was plain Lesley Hornby from Neasden in north London when at the age of 15 she met Justin de Villeneuve, who was to mastermind her transformation into one of the world's most famous women. Although he was ten years older than her, they started dating and when she was offered the chance to model a new haircut he encouraged her to go. Her new look transformed her into the face of the Sixties, and Villeneuve cast himself in the role of her mentor. They continued to date until she ended the relationship in the early 1970s.



Sandy Shaw was only 17 years old when she rose to fame in the Swinging Sixties with hits that included *Long Live Love*. Shaw, who came from Dagenham, invested in the business of her husband, the fashion designer Jeff Banks, pictured with her above, only to see her money disappear with the collapse of his company. They divorced in 1981. She now concentrates on her work with the Arts Clinic, a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to the psychological well-being of artists and performers.



Brigitte Bardot shot to stardom after Roger Vadim took her under his wing and encouraged her to pursue acting as a career. They married in 1952 when she was 19. He directed her in the film, *And Woman Was Created*. She and Vadim were divorced in 1957, by which time she was an international star. Vadim encouraged her to pursue acting. They married in 1952 when she was 18. He directed her in the film, *And Woman Was Created*.



The life of Lucille Ball, born beautiful but poor, was transformed by her meeting with Desi Arnaz, a Florida band leader who went on to star with her in the hit show, *I Love Lucy*. His heavy drinking and womanising led to their divorce in 1960.

Mutiny over plan to put Pitcairn on the Internet

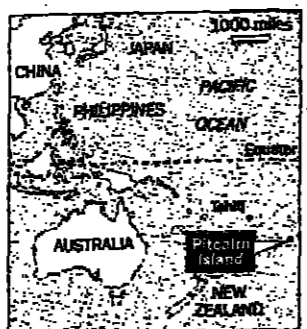
By PAUL WHITTAKER

A DESCENDANT of the *Bounty* mutineer Fletcher Christian is facing open revolt from fellow Pitcairn islanders over a plan to register the remote Pacific outpost on the Internet.

Tom Christian, 62, the great-great-grandson of the defiant first officer who settled on the island more than 200 years ago, embarked on the money-making venture after moves by British administrators to halve his salary as the island's communications officer. Mr Christian, who has served in his £4,300-a-year post for the past 42 years, registered Pitcairn as a domain on the Internet and planned to sell the "PN" electronic addresses for £100 a time in order to supplement his income.

But the descendants of the mutineers who inhabit the 1.75sq mile island halfway between New Zealand and South America are fighting Mr Christian's move. Backed by Leon Salt, the Commissioner for Pitcairn, they claim the PN domain should serve the interests of people from the island rather than individuals or organisations not connected with Pitcairn. Mr Christian, whose name-

sake led the revolt against the *Bounty*'s master, Captain William Bligh, in April 1789, said: "It seems they want to patent the name of the island and anything to do with the *Bounty*. But I am upset by their moves to stop me. Maybe the blood of mutineers still runs in my veins. My salary is about to be halved and I will have to take a big salary cut in April so



I am looking for an alternative source to keep my income up. I thought of the idea of using the Internet but the administration claims that if any money is to be made out of it they want it for the benefit of everyone."

Mr Christian, who is due to retire from his post soon, is ready for a fight with Mr Salt, who controls the island - one

of the last remaining outposts in the Empire - from his office more than 3,000 miles away in Auckland. And he has found an unlikely ally in the British MP Bernard Jenkin, who has tabled three written Parliamentary questions asking ministers to explain the Government's position towards the development of the Internet in Britain's dependent territories.

Mr Jenkin, Tory MP for North Essex and a keen Internet fan, said yesterday: "The UK domain name is not owned by the Government so why should it take control of Pitcairn's name?"

Mr Jenkin is hoping that a meeting between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign Office will resolve the issue. "The Government is acting unreasonably but I am hopeful that this matter can be resolved sensibly. It is unfair for them to say they own the PN address - they don't own the UK dot address," Mr Jenkin said.

Mr Christian added: "I feel they may have a point but on the other hand they didn't know anything about the Internet until we registered the name."

Burglar smoked out by DNA clue

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

POLICE have succeeded in tracing a burglar with the help of a cigarette butt he discarded at the scene of his crime. A sample of DNA extracted from saliva left on the butt identified him as Gary Chaffe, a 26-year-old responsible for a string of previous offences which had led to his inclusion in the national genetic fingerprint database.

Police believe it is the first time a criminal has been convicted on the basis of evidence from a cigarette end. When confronted with the DNA evidence, Chaffe confessed immediately. Without it, he would almost certainly have escaped undetected.

Chaffe dropped the butt during a raid at Sanders Fishmongers in Budleigh Salterton, East Devon, having travelled from his home in Bristol 90 miles away. The cigarette end was found by shop manager Mike England, aged 26, as he helped clear up the mess left by the burglar who stole a total of £1,397 from the till and a safe.

Chaffe had discarded it away under an awning at the back of the shop where he had smashed open the till and Mr England pointed it out to detectives because he knew

that no one at the shop smoked. He said: "The burglar had got in through the back and had left the cigarette end under a covering where he had broken open the till. The police came and picked it up and got DNA off it."

"I could not believe it when they told me they had caught the burglar from the cigarette end."

"We get a lot of criminals coming down the motorway and then going back up again and most of them think they can get away with it. This shows that it will not be so easy for them in the future."

Sergeant Nick Yates, from Devon and Cornwall Police, said: "This is another example of how we are using increasingly sophisticated forensic methods which lead to a lot of these offences being solved. It is probable that without this evidence this case would have remained undetected."

"If methods continue to improve it may become almost impossible for someone to commit a crime without leaving forensic evidence that may be used to trace them."

Chaffe, who admitted the burglary, was given a conditional discharge by Exmouth magistrates.

Bishop says he wept at cancer diagnosis

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

AN Anglican bishop has described how he was diagnosed within months of his consecration as having cancer. The Right Rev Will Stewart, who moved from being a parish priest in Suffolk to become Bishop of Taunton last June, is undergoing his second course of chemotherapy for a malignant tumour that is pressing on his left eye and the base of his brain.

Writing in *The Grapevine*, the Bath and Wells diocesan newspaper, Bishop Stewart, 54, says: "When I was told that I had a malignant tumour, my mind changed gear. I was faced with my own mortality in a new way. This is something that, until now, has always happened to someone else."

He says pain is something to be kept at bay at all costs because it diminishes the fullness of life and will ultimately destroy it. "Like all healthy people, I find life to be very good," he says. "I do not want to leave this world, especially since God has just called me to a new and exciting ministry, which only a year ago was unthinkable. I wept at the prospect of losing it all, and recoiled from the unknown path that would take me there."

Bishop Stewart, who was consecrated at Westminster Abbey by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, had moved from his previous incumbency at Sherford to Taunton when sinus trouble, from which he had suffered, returned, and he went to London for a scan.

He discovered that he had a malignant tumour, and began the first of four sessions of chemotherapy at the beginning of December. The last session will be followed by a course of radiotherapy aimed at killing the tumour. He has been told that the treatment has a 70 per cent chance of success.

Bishop Stewart, who is married with four children aged 18 to 26, says that few people can expect to get through the coming year without experiencing some sort of adversity. "When I was a young Christian, I was encouraged to learn a verse from Isaiah in the face of the difficulties of my new calling. It has always remained with me, was a frequent means of grace in 1997, and has attained new meaning in recent weeks."

He quotes Isaiah 41:10: "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."

Bishop Stewart said yesterday: "I think this experience will help me become a better bishop in terms of helping people. I would say to anyone who finds themselves being diagnosed with cancer that they should share their feelings, talk about it and admit their worries. If anyone would like to write to me I will be pleased to receive their letters."

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Princes joined by ski scene debutante



Prince Harry and Zara Phillips on the slopes in Klosters yesterday

Alan Hamilton sees a confident Zara Phillips face the cameras with her cousins

ZARA PHILLIPS, daughter of the Princess Royal, took to the slopes of Klosters for the first time yesterday to join the Prince of Wales and his sons on their annual Swiss skiing holiday.

The confident 16-year-old is new to the Royal ski scene but was invited to join the trip to accompany her more media-shy cousin William and help him through the awkward task of facing the world's press. William, 15, declined to come on last year's holiday because, it was said, he could not abide the media attention. Instead he went shooting in England, in an attempt to avoid the sort of photo-call arranged by his father yesterday.

In return for a press-free holiday, the Prince of Wales and his sons posed for three minutes before 50 cameramen, from respectable Fleet Street regulars to excitable French paparazzi, assembled at a pre-arranged rendezvous on the nursery slopes of the Seifrenga mountain on the edge of the village of Klosters.

Photocalls on previous ski holidays tended to be *ad hoc* sunbites, agreed to grudgingly and only because the slopes were thick with photographers, many of them expert skiers. This year, as part of the Prince's effort to improve relations with the press, the event was arranged well in advance, although the letter inviting editors to send representatives contained a dire warning that any misbehaviour would ensure the withdrawal of facilities.

"This is a private holiday, but the Prince appreciates there is a legitimate public interest," Sandy Herney, the Prince's spokeswoman, said yesterday morning as she asked all those present to sign their names in a book. She had previously thanked the press for leaving the royal party completely alone on New Year's Day, their first full day of skiing.

Shortly before 10am, in bright sunshine but with the wind noticeably chilling and bringing the promise of a much-needed snowfall, a fully-kitted royal detective appeared over the brow of the hill on the T-bar ski lift. He was followed on the next bar



The Prince of Wales broke with tradition yesterday when he wore a red-tasseled hat to the annual Klosters photo-call. It was a surprising nod to modernity from a man who appears to have recycled the same grey all-in-one for the past five seasons — at least. Royal deconstructionists may interpret the hat as a potent

symbol of the Prince's determination to take the Royal Family forward into the 21st century. Others may simply recognise it as the sign of a man desperate not to be outdone by his teenage sons. For there is no doubt that a woolly hat is the *sine qua non* of youth style this winter. Beanies with "go-faster" stripes to

more classic "seven dwarves" designs have filled the pages of style magazines. But, as ever, the real fashion show was given by Tara Palmer-Tomkinson, who is once again entertaining the royal party with her skin-tight cat-suits. This year she has packed something called a "pussy suit".

into the assembled lenses. The cameramen asked them to shift their angle, and the royal line shuffled its pose to point slightly downhill. "We're the barbershop quartet," said the Prince of Wales with one of his crooked self-deprecating half-smiles. "There are too many of you," he called, not unkindly.

One hundred and eighty seconds later, it was all over. "Thank you very much, and a Happy New Year," the Prince of Wales called to the assembled company, as the party skied off down the hill and out of sight, no doubt on their way to a more serious *pisse* somewhere above 1300 metres. The cameramen obediently dispersed.

Apart from the photocall, the annual skiing holiday is following its traditional pattern. The royal party, accompanied by Tiggy Legg-Bourke to look after the boys, arrived on New Year's Eve and checked into the Walsertal, their regular hotel in the middle of Klosters and one famous for its ability to keep out intrusive cameramen.

On their first night they enjoyed a New Year's Eve party and fireworks at the hotel in the company of stalwarts including Charles and Patti Palmer-Tomkinson and their daughters Tara and Santa. Mrs Palmer-Tomkinson had both legs crushed in the avalanche which engulfed the royal party in 1988 and killed an equerry, Major Hugh Lindsay.

On New Year's Day the Prince returned to the Gotthard, the mountain where the avalanche happened, to ski some of the more advanced runs, and in the evening joined his sons in toboggan racing on the lower, safer slopes.

Before their return to London on Tuesday, and the bleak prospect of school, the young princes are expected to try the other varieties of sport on offer, including snowboarding and Bigfoot skiing, which involves the use of short, wide skis. Prince William will also have extra instruction in conventional skiing to bring him up to the standard of his brother.

Skiing, Weekend, page 25

Queen's great aunt tried to free her Nazi brother

PRINCESS ALICE, a great aunt of the Queen, used her influence to try to win government help for her Nazi brother after the Second World War, documents released yesterday reveal.

She ordered an aide to write to the Foreign Office at a time when her brother, Charles Edward, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, was seeking freedom in Germany where he was interned as a Nazi sympathiser.

Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, claimed that her Eton-educated brother — a member of the Nazi Party — had sought to improve Anglo-German relations between the wars and should be treated sympathetically.

In a letter on Buckingham Palace headed writing paper, Sir Edward Ford, assistant private secretary to King George VI, wrote: "She hopes that they (Foreign Office officials) might be able to say something in his favour." The letter concludes: "I feel as if I should be failing in my duty to HRH if I did not mention this to you."

The letter clearly embarrassed the government of 1947. In a memo attached to the letter, a government official wrote: "The record of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg's activities is pretty black."

Nevertheless, a researcher was asked to compile a report on his background. It emerged that the Duke, then 63, a grandson of Queen Victoria, had been an "ardent Nazi". Although born in Surrey, he had left Britain in his teens to train at a German military academy. The documents, released at the Public Record Office under the 50-year rule, show that the Duke was discovered to have acted as a foreign envoy for Hitler before the war and held senior positions in the Nazi Party.

Having fought for Germany in the First World War, for which he was deprived of his English titles, he subsequently became president of the German Red Cross and held the rank of general in the SA (Nazi storm troopers). One of the richest men in Germany, he was a "fervent admirer of Hitler". Before the outbreak of

Princess begged Foreign Office to release the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, held after the war, write Adrian Lee and Jane Marriott

the Second World War he was regarded as a Nazi showpiece to prove to the rest of the world that the German aristocracy supported a Nazi regime.

Questioned immediately after the fall of the Third Reich he had told American soldiers: "No one in Germany should be punished for any war crimes because no one is guilty of any." He added: "Hitler did a wonderful job", and made anti-Semitic remarks.

A brief note was sent to Sir Edward, stating that the government felt unable to intervene in his case. He was tried three times by denazification courts on increasingly serious charges and finally classed as a "Nazi camp follower, category four".

Arrested in 1945, his punishment was a fine of 15,000 Deutschmarks (around £3,000 today).

In contrast, his sister, HRH Princess Alice, was regarded as quintessentially English. Her husband renounced his German titles in 1917 and was created the Earl of Athlone. Both were active on Britain's behalf: during the Second World War the Princess became Commandant-in-Chief of the Women's Transport Service (FANY), was appointed GBE in 1937 and Dame Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order in 1948.

The Duke died in 1954. His sister survived him until 1981 and, at almost 98, was the

longest-lived member of the British Royal Family to date.

In the postwar years, the issue of Nazi sympathisers was still a major source of concern. The government was also severely embarrassed in 1947 by the case of Margaret Joyce, the widow of William "Lord Haw Haw" Joyce who was hanged in January 1946 for treason for his wartime radio broadcasts from Bremen and Hamburg.

Arrested in May 1945, the second Mrs Joyce had been active in the British Fascist movement before the Second World War and had moved with her husband to Germany in 1939.

In 1947 Mrs Joyce was still being held by military authorities, without trial, on the Continent and treated as a German national. Documents show that the government considered treating her as a British subject because nationality law was not clear, and allowing her to slip quietly back into England to live with her parents. Although she had been born in Manchester she became a German national when her husband adopted German nationality during the war.

The factor of nationality was a key point in American-born William Joyce's trial. The British government's main right to try him was based on Joyce's holding of a British passport and that he had, at one time, declared himself a British citizen.

Because Mrs Joyce's husband had been treated as a British citizen so he could be tried, the government faced a terrible dilemma. If it was decided that she should be treated as a British citizen — as she desired — the government would be accused of holding one of its subjects without trial for two years.

It was decided that allowing her to return to England to live was too great an embarrassment. She was released in Germany in January 1948 and was classed as a German citizen. In an interview in 1964 she told reporters "I still love Britain — more than ever in fact."

She regarded Britain as the only really "civilised" country.



Princess Alice ordered an aide to plead with the government on Buckingham Palace writing paper



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Cabinet leaders who were born to be political stars

THE first comprehensive study of the astrological make-up of the nation's political leaders has suggested a link between star signs and parliamentary success.

The House of Commons is dominated by Arians, the leadership sign of the zodiac, and Taurus. Leo (July 24-August 23) is the Cabinet leader - six members of Tony Blair's team were born under the sign. Characteristics include pride, vanity, a wish to lead and to be loved. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, is one. They are also insecure. Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, is another.

Aries dominates the Shadow Cabinet with four members. Mr Hague, born March 26, 1961, is their leader. They are noted for rushing into battle, for their self-will and self-sufficiency. They are also loud-mouthed.

The study, by A. S. Biss, the Westminster political lobbyist, shows that only 37 of the 650 MPs were born under Scorpio (October 24-November 23). None is in the Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet. Their absence is surprising considering their influence on the international stage - Indira Gandhi, King Hussein of Jordan, General de Gaulle and François Mitterrand

Andrew Pierce on the link between MPs' zodiac signs and success in the Commons

were Scorpios. The back benches are also dominated by those born under Aries (March 21-April 20). There are 73, followed by Taurus (70).

The leading Taurus is the Prime Minister, who was born on May 6, 1953. Stargazers say Taurus are solid and reliable, and enjoy hogging the limelight. They also like their creature comforts.

Marjorie Orr, the astrologer. The answer was in the stars, she said. "In the 1980's the Thatcher government was dominated by Gemini and Leo, which are characterised by loud noise, competitiveness, and showiness. But Arians are natural leaders which is why there are so many in the Commons today." Prominent Ari-

ans include John Major, Lord Tebbit, Michael Heseltine, and Lord Callaghan.

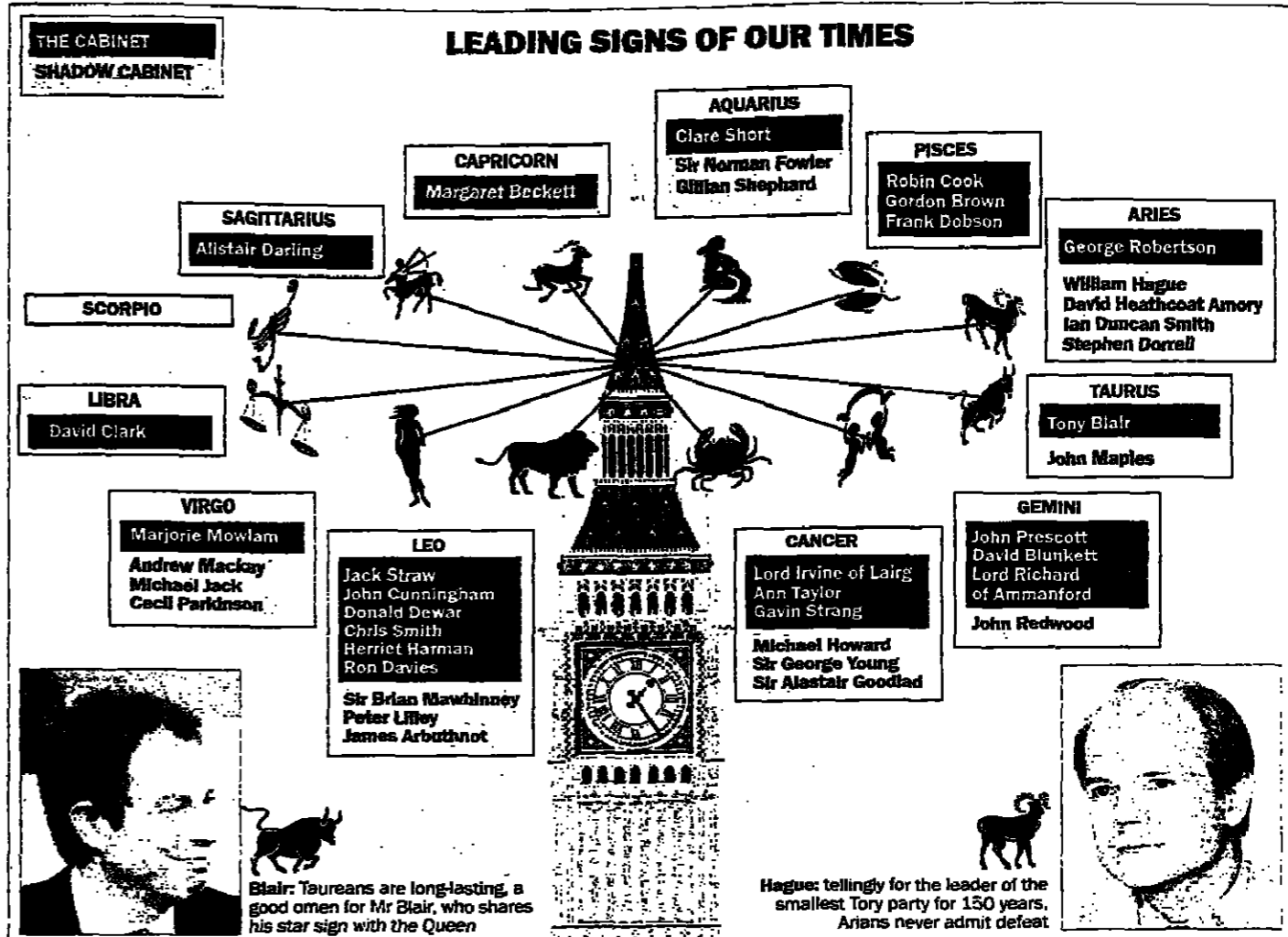
"Taurus are more solid and reliable with an enduring earthy kind of energy. They are also control freaks," said Miss Orr.

The Shadow Cabinet has been derided as lacklustre but if the stars are anything to go by, they could yet cause trouble for Mr Blair. Miss Orr said: "It is dominated by Aries, the natural sign of leadership in the zodiac. They like to be first, like to win and like to fight."

Having pored over her astrological charts for the next year the omens are not good for the Cabinet. "It is a tricky year for Taurus, especially Tony Blair." With the revolt on benefits continuing Miss Orr predicted: "By late January Mr Blair will be feeling unloved and rattled. By the middle of March his life will have turned upside down. I also see bad signs for Gordon Brown and Harriet Harman."

Mr Hague should not derive too much satisfaction from the predictions. "He is at a time of his life when his energy is not in his ambitions," she said. "I see banana skins all year."

Educationalists dismiss any link



between the zodiac and academic, political and sporting success. Their research has shown that the significance of the date of birth is more to do with when children started school.

They argue that the later the birthday in the school year the poorer the child's performance, which says little for the intellectual qualities of the House of Commons. Five of the six most common star signs among MPs are in late spring or summer.

Children born in the autumn have the advantage of nine terms of education before they take tests at age seven. Those with birthdays in July and August have often had only six. Children born between September and December consistently outperformed those born in May to August. Only three Cabinet ministers were born in the autumn.

Caroline Sharp, senior research officer at the National Foundation for Educational Research, was surprised so few MPs were autumn-born. "As there is a clear link between academic or sporting success and autumn births you would expect to see plenty among high-flying politicians," she said. "Perhaps the skills needed for politics are different."

At least politicians are lucky. Aries, their most common sign, has produced more lonely winners than any other.



The Battle of Arras heralded the Allied offensive in 1917

Two First World War bodies identified

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

TWO of the 27 British soldiers killed during the Battle of Arras in 1917 and found in a French grave by archaeologists searching for a Celtic settlement have been identified as privates from the 13th Battalion Royal Fusiliers.

Privates Frank King and George Hamilton Anderson died on April 11, 1917, but their remains were not recovered until a group of French archaeologists digging at Monchy-Le-Preaux in northern France, came across the bodies.

Ministry of Defence histori-

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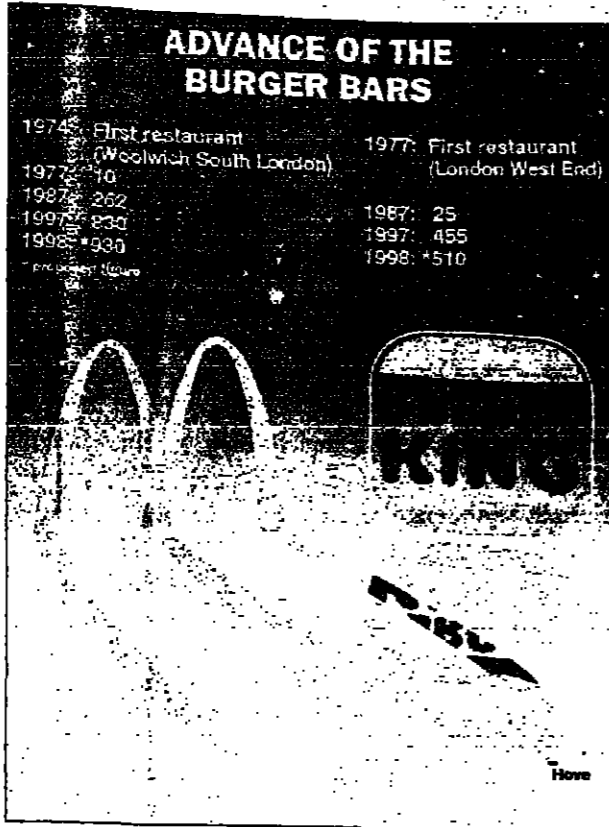
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Welcome to a burger-free haven



ADVANCE OF THE BURGER BARS

1974: First restaurant (Woolwich South London)	1977: First restaurant (London West End)
1975: 10	1978: 25
1982: 252	1987: 25
1992: 832	1997: 455
1995: 930	1998: *510

Dominic Kennedy samples the culinary delights of Hove, the biggest town in Britain to have resisted the McDonald's invasion

ASK for a portion of fries in Hove and you are likely to be fixed with the withering rebuke: "They're chips, actually."

The 67,602 people of the elegant South Coast resort are manning the last bastion of resistance to the tidal wave of American-style hamburger bars that has swept the country. It is the largest town in Britain without a McDonald's or a Burger King.

In the week when the two fast-food chains resumed hostilities by announcing a total of 355 new restaurants in Britain within three years, the diners of Hove could hardly care less. Together, McDonald's and Burger King will soon have more than 1,400 outlets nationwide.

To wander along Church Road in Hove, East Sussex, is to see how British culinary tastes might have developed over the past 20 years had the hamburger habit never crossed the Atlantic.

In the main street, parallel to the seafront, are six Italian, five Indian and two French restaurants, two pizza parlours, two kebab shops, Japanese, Thai, American, Mexican, Spanish, Turkish and English restaurants, a continental brasserie, a coffee shop and a fish-and-chip emporium. Until the first McDonald's opened in Woolwich, southeast London, in 1974, the only chain serving

hamburgers in Britain was the Wimpy bar, created by the Joe Lyons catering empire.

The fast-food chain spread slowly at first, with just 165 McDonald's in the UK by the end of 1984. Growth has accelerated since then, with 830 today, including at airports, service stations and ferry terminals.

Although it is fashionable to sneer at the Big Mac, fans include the footballers David Platt and Alan Shearer, the athlete Roger Black and the chef Albert Roux. Tony Blair was seen in McDonald's twice last year, and Diana, Princess of Wales, was photographed at the branch near Kensington Palace in 1992, queuing with Prince William.

McDonald's has broken into such middle-class bastions as Hampstead in north-west London, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Harrogate. So why have the people of Hove remained immune?

"McDonald's is a very rushed atmosphere," said Nick Manns, 30, an underwriter, sitting in Centre Ville, a French bistro with scrubbed floors. There was a huge variety of dishes from bagels to poulet citron at the café (motto: "Where Friends Meet"). The bangers, peas and mash came with red wine gravy (£3.75), the scrambled eggs with Gruyère and half a baguette (£3.25).

The staff were warm and



A taste of Hove: Robert Burgin, of Blossoms café, above, believes in the personal touch, while June Van De Poll, with Samantha in Georgie's, below left, thinks that McDonald's is good value. Customers inside Floriana's, below right, are offered traditional English food



friendly and did not talk like automatons. The food took ages to arrive, but then this was Hove, where the most famous clock is made of flowers and time means nothing to the hordes of pensioners and tourists who promenade along the Regency terraces and squares.

True to the bistro's motto, Mr Manns was meeting his friend Dan Wilson, 30, an insurance agent, who said: "McDonald's have dreadful service a lot of the time. They are miserable. They don't care about you." Nobody could say

that about the service at Blossoms café, around the corner in George Street.

Robert Burgin, 40, a cook, having just kissed one of his regular female customers, said: "We had a lady in last year, Maisie, who was celebrating her 90th birthday here. We put up banners and balloons and made a cake and gave her a bouquet of flowers. One man is going to have a stag breakfast for 30 of his friends here soon."

In the kitchen of Floriana's, Francis Incurvaja, 42, from Malta, simultaneously sub-

merges chips into a pan of oil, fries an egg, grills bacon and tomatoes and microwaves a potato. "Not many people can do traditional food. Some of my customers have been with me since I opened," he said.

Babak Iran, 31, an Iranian, started as the dishwasher at Georgie's bistro eight years ago and now owns it. Reversing the trend towards hamburger restaurants, his is a former Wimpy bar which has diversified into cottage pies, sandwiches and jacket potatoes. "There's a lot of competition here," Mr Iran said.

"Price is very important. Nine out of ten of my customers are regulars."

June Van De Poll, in Georgie's with Samantha, aged 4, said that her daughter would love a McDonald's: "The happy meals are so cheap, £1.99, and you get a little toy with it."

Hove's day may yet come. McDonald's and Burger King have still to name the locations for their expansions next year. The town's MP, Ivor Caplin, former leader of Hove council, said: "My guess is that when there is an

appropriate site we will get an application. There has never really been an opportunity for either of them here."

Two possible chances are if new leisure developments go ahead on the seafront or port. Mr Caplin would welcome the jobs in a town with high youth unemployment. "I don't think it would detract from the area," he said.

Down the road, in gaudy, cheerful Brighton, there are already three McDonald's and two Burger King restaurants. For the people of Hove, that says it all.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ski centre manager killed in avalanche

The manager of a ski centre was killed by an avalanche in the French Alps as he tested a snow slope for other skiers. Chris Poole, 32, from Stoke-on-Trent, was buried as he led a six-strong party off piste near the resort of Tignes. Attempts were made to rescue him by the group of skiers, who included his sister Alison and her fiancé. He was taken to hospital in Grenoble but died later. Last February Mr Poole was swept 700ft down a mountain by an avalanche in the Grampians.

Driver remanded

A learner driver was remanded in custody in connection with the killing of Lisa Westbroom, 21, in a road accident in Woodcote, Oxfordshire, on New Year's Eve. Josef Hearne, 20, from Whitchurch, was charged with eight offences.

Murder charge

A woman has been charged with the murder of a man stabbed on New Year's Eve. The body of Peter Priestley, 43, was found by police at his home in Bradford, West Yorkshire. A 40-year-old woman is to appear before magistrates today.

£3,000 for girl

A girl aged five has been awarded £3,000 after being trapped when the automatic doors of a train closed on her head. Roxanne Bancroft, from Stockport, was 21 months old when the accident happened at Brinnington station, near Stockport.

Wrong way driver

A pensioner caused chaos on the M25 yesterday when he drove the wrong way in the outside lane for ten miles. Police have not yet decided if the man, from Sevenoaks, Kent, who has not been named, should face criminal charges but it is unlikely.

Patrols mooted

Farmers are considering forming shotgun patrols to counter an arsonist believed to have struck three times in recent days. The fire-raiser is thought to have started barn and store blazes causing £750,000 damage in Cornwall since September.

Clean and green

A contribution from the shampoo company Timotei helped the charity Plant Life to buy 46 acres of meadowland near Hereford as a reserve for wild flowers and insects. The land has never been treated with pesticides or artificial fertilisers.

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BY THE WIDE
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Fat activists seek to tip scales of justice

Tunku Varadarajan on the fightback by America's 'oppressed obese'

AN INCREASINGLY assertive and articulate fat liberation movement is gathering pace across America, taking the battle to the sizeists, weightists and stoutheists who have for so long oppressed the country's "obese".

Through vocal lobby groups and magazines, Internet websites and legal clinics, study centres and radio programmes, the movement is brandishing a new message: don't fight fat, fight for fat.

The presence of these groups, whose numbers run into the hundreds, has been noted acutely in the past few weeks as a woman called Marlene Corrigan went on trial in California, accused of subjecting her 13-year-old daughter to prolonged child abuse. The daughter, Christina, died last year, weighing 680 lb — more than 48 stone.

Although prosecutors deny that they charged Mrs Corrigan because of Christina's size — and point, instead, to the fact that the dead girl's body was covered in sores and faeces — fat activists insist that she is being persecuted for having an obese child. The trial judge will announce his verdict on Friday, but the case has already been adopted as a cause célèbre by the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (NAAFA), a San Francisco-based umbrella group that brings together America's "fat rights" lobbyists.

One among them is Marilyn Wann, a 31-year-old Californian who edits a magazine called *FatSo?* which she founded four years ago to "give voice to the oppressed fat people" of America. Ms Wann, who is 5ft 4in and 270lb (19.2 st), has a master's degree



Christina Corrigan was 48 stone when she died. Her mother, Marlene, is accused of abusing her

in literary criticism from Stanford University, where she "felt like a freak surrounded by all those joggers".

Ms Wann tells how the seeds for her magazine were sown when she approached the Blue Cross insurance company in 1993, hoping to take out a health insurance policy. The company rejected her, saying that her "morbid obesity" made her a "high-risk candidate". Ms Wann said: "I found that appalling, given the claims that fat people should do something about their health. But how, if we can't get health insurance?"

Ms Wann, like others of her ilk, insists on using the word "fat" — which she smugly calls "the f-word". She said: "We're reclaiming the word, as was once done with 'black' and 'queer'. I reject the euphemisms, like large, big-boned, heavy, chubby, voluptuous, Rubenesque and plump. The word 'overweight' is out, too. It's judgmental... over whose weight? 'Obese' is wrong as well, as it implies ill-health and is used to justify insurance discrimination and gives doctors a licence to perform

are openly lesbian. A particularly vocal example is *Fat Girl*, a magazine for "fat dykes and the women who want them". Other examples include *Rump Parliament* ("dedicated to size acceptance activism"), *Widdershins* (magic, sorcery and witchcraft for fat women), and *Pathetic Life* (the diary of "an unapologetic fat slob anarchist").

Ms Wann concedes that the fat activist movement is predominantly female, and that there is a significant lesbian tendency within it. "The lesbians are doing the most serious political work," she said, pointing out that she dated men. Women would always outnumber men in the movement, because "men and women experience fatness differently, and at different phases of their lives". Women were made aware of their shape earlier and as a result began to develop a "political consciousness" earlier.

Most serious fat activists focus their efforts on an attempt to reform American anti-discrimination law. With the exception of Michigan, no state explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of size. Such discrimination, fat activists argue, is rife at the American workplace. James Goodman, a lawyer who runs the Persons with Disabilities Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, confirmed this. "Wherever you look, you'll find that a fat person has a hard time getting hired," he said. "And if he's hired, he has a hard time getting a promotion."

Mr Goodman points also to a ticklish paradox: many fat people, especially those classified by doctors as "obese", would be able to sue for discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act. But this involves stating that one is "disabled", a label that few fat people will accept. Discrimination, activists say, can be petty as well as serious. An example of the former was provided by Ms Solovay: "Very fat people need to buy two seats for themselves on an airplane. They can't fit into one. Yet airlines will give them only one set of air-miles. They ignore the fact that you bought two tickets, at considerable personal cost. Now I ask you: is that fair?"

Even "thin" people, it has to be said, would struggle to say that it was. *FatSo?* magazine is on the Internet at www.fatso.com



Marilyn Wann (5ft 4in and 270lb) the editor of *FatSo?* magazine, which pilloried fat-conscious Oprah Winfrey

FATSO?

Cutting critics down to size

FatSo? magazine is highly entertaining, even for "thin" readers. A recent issue came with a flip-book of photographs of Oprah Winfrey, a woman who is particularly reviled in the community of fat activists for declaring that being overweight made her feel terrible. By flipping the pages rapidly back and forth, readers could see Ms Winfrey put on weight, and then lose it. The magazine also publishes lists of heroes and villains. One recent hero was Ganesha, the elephant-headed Hindu God with a fat stomach; a villain was Jean Nidetch who started *Weight Watchers*.



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HOW THE WORLD'S HEAVYWEIGHTS MEASURE UP

- 35 per cent of American adults are classified as "obese" by their doctors (ie, their weight is deemed to be so much above the norm that their health is harmed).
- 51 per cent of Canadian adults, 32 per cent of Germans, and 30 per cent of Britons are obese.
- Only 12 per cent of Japanese adults suffer from obesity, the lowest rate for a developed country.
- 75 per cent of adults in Tonga are obese, the highest rate in the developing world.
- Americans spend \$30 billion a year on dieting.
- 25 per cent of Americans are on a diet at any given time.
- 25 per cent of American children are obese or seriously overweight.



Rebel major plans journal for Forces

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE Army officer who risked court martial when he wrote an unauthorised pamphlet accusing his service of elitism and class prejudice is planning to bring out a new journal for the Forces in early February.

Major Eric Joyce, 36, who was allowed to stay in the Army provided he did not attempt to write any further critical articles without permission, is calling his new publishing venture *The Armed Services Forum*. He hopes that the first publication will include articles from service personnel as well as politicians and academics.

Major Joyce, who is now attached to the Adjutant General's Corps, has consulted with the Ministry of Defence over his plans and the journal will have to be officially approved before it can be published. He intends to publish it

quarterly and it will be distributed to service messes, priced £2. He plans to publish articles that will call for the Army to develop a culture based on fairness.

After his article, which accused the Army of being divided by class, appeared in a *Fabian Society* pamphlet last August, he was suspended from his job and expected to face a court martial for breaching Army rules about publishing without authorisation. After lengthy consideration it was decided to give him a second chance but he was warned to stop talking to the media.

His campaign was given a boost by George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, who in a speech in November called on the Army to recruit more officers from state schools to avoid the accusation of preserving a privileged elite.

Banks revealed as a pigeon fancier

By PAUL WILKINSON

TONY BANKS, a government minister well known for his love of football, declared an interest in one of sport's less glamorous pursuits when he backed a campaign by pigeon fanciers.

Mr Banks, the Sports Minister, has joined the fight to protect a set of pigeon lofts — known as crees — as a site of architectural and historical interest. The crees, which at more than 100 years old are thought to be among the oldest in the country, are in Ryhope, Sunderland, on allotments threatened by developers.

He lent his support after Fraser Kemp, Labour MP for Houghton and Washington East, wrote to Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, asking him to send English Heritage inspectors to the site. The letter was passed to Mr Banks, who asked Mr Kemp for photographs of the crees, and dis-

closed his personal interest in a hand-written note at the bottom of his reply.

Mr Kemp said: "Tony Banks is a great pigeon fancier himself. Any support we can get from members of the community or government ministers will all add to the fight for justice. Pigeon racing is part of the history of the North East and we want to preserve the crees."

Lewis Llewellyn, one of the 20 retired miners who keep 520 birds on the site, said: "I had no idea Mr Banks was a pigeon man but I am delighted he is behind us. These allotments are our life."

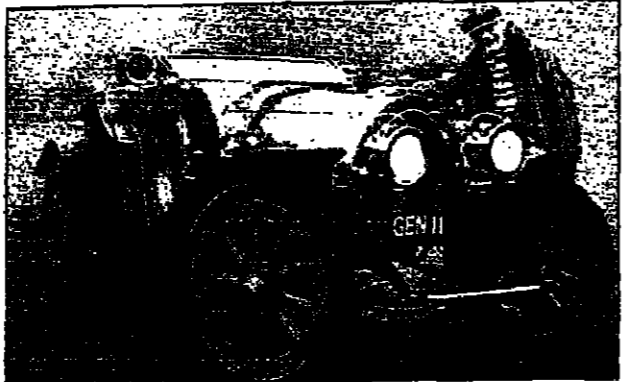
The land, once owned by the North Eastern Co-operative Society, belongs to a Newcastle firm that has given the allotment holders notice to quit. A decision on a planning application for housing is expected this month.

Chitty turns into a green machine

THAT much-loved star of children's cinema, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, is to be fitted with a new engine to make it more environmentally friendly.

Engineers are working on the engine so that the gas guzzler, which has been kept in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, since 1972, can celebrate its 30th birthday with unleaded petrol. Pierre Picton, the owner, said: "Ford are working on a new engine for her, and I should know more soon. She runs on four-star at the moment you've got to remember when she was built. But when the engine's done she will be more environmentally friendly and that will be better for all the children that come and see her."

The car, powered by a 1960s 3.0 litre Ford engine underneath its 1920s body, was



Pierre Picton with his car Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

created by the team that built the early James Bond cars.

That was not Chitty's only connection with 007 — the book on which the film was based was by Ian Fleming and the film was produced by the late Cubby Broccoli, who were responsible for many of

the secret agent's finest moments on screen.

Three decades have passed since *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, starring Dick Van Dyke and Sally Ann Howes, premiered in London. But Chitty still draws huge crowds wherever it goes. Behind the wheel, dressed like Professor Potts, is Mr Picton, a former circus clown who appeared in the film.

Mr Picton said: "I had been working on the film in 1967, doing the long-shot driving. When it was released in 1968, the film company took the car round the world, doing the PR. When it came back I contacted Cubby Broccoli's company and they sold it to me."

Mr Picton and Chitty have been travelling companions ever since, attending rallies and raising money for charity. A family of four joined Mr Picton aboard Chitty for a rally around London after bidding £7,500 for the trip during the Children In Need appeal. The sum is tribute to the popularity of a car that Graham Hill once drove around the Crystal Palace raceway at 100mph.

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كلمة الالهي

Code will tame wild mushroom gatherers

The popularity of continental cuisine has led to a worrying rise in fungi-gathering, says Nick Nuttall

COLLECTING of wild mushrooms and fungi is to be restricted amid fears that over-picking is harming woodlands and wildlife.

In recent years there has been a marked rise in the number of pickers, both casual and commercial, visiting woods to gather fungi for dinner tables in Britain or for export, mainly to France. Pickers in southern England are said to be making £2,000 a week supplying restaurants in London with penny buns, chanterelles, slippery jacks and herbs of plenty.

Government wildlife advisers and conservation organisations are drawing up a code, to be published this year, that will cover casual pickers. A set of rules for commercial pickers, which might include a licensing system, is also being considered. There will also be a code for scientists.

It is thought that the popularity of continental cooking books and the rise of chefs who have championed fungi have contributed to the rising interest in wild mushrooms.

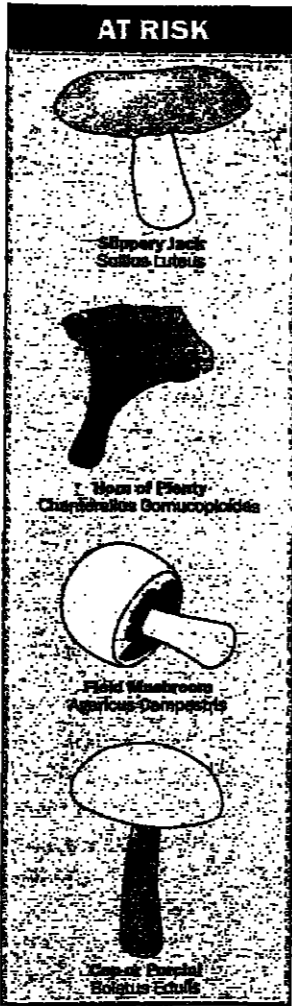
Brian Johnson, an adviser with English Nature's Botanical Services, said: "The continentals eat wild mushrooms in huge quantities. In Britain, until recently, we have had something of a Shakespearean view, seeing them as part of the black arts and for making poisons. Now, however, commercial picking is developing very quickly in this country. In Scotland it is already firmly established. One company is exporting 15,000 kg of chanterelles a year from woodland."

Critics say the uncontrolled boom in picking is producing tensions between pickers and landowners — including the National Trust and the Forestry Commission — who fear birds will be disturbed and woodland flowers trampled. Fungi are also vital in the delicate food chain, rotting dead leaves and recycling the nutrients for flowers and trees.

Mushrooms produce fruiting bodies in the spring and autumn which are food sources for insects and other invertebrates upon which animals high up the food chain depend. Taking too many of the fruiting bodies, pickers may be unwittingly pushing some fungal species to local extinction. The fruiting bodies contain spores which, it is suspected, are vital for regenerating a fungus.

Vincent Fleming of Scottish Natural Heritage said that many mammals, including red squirrels and deer, depend on fungi.

But some fungi experts, while supporting moves to contain picking, believe the threat is being exaggerated. Maurice Rotheroe, of the British Mycological Society and a consultant to the new National Botanic Gardens of Wales, said: "There is no evidence that the picking is causing any damage to rare or common fungi. It is not a conservation issue." A great deal had been made by some critics



A PICKER'S CODE

Proposals expected in the new code include:

- creating fungal nature reserves where picking is forbidden
- banning the use of rakes to collect fungi
- issuing of maximum permitted weights for pickers
- instructions to leave some fruiting bodies rather than clearing a site
- naturalists also to take only a minimum of species



One company is said to export 15,000kg of chanterelles a year from woodland, raising concerns about both commercial and casual picking

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Mushrooms are one of hundreds of different wild plants providing food for the forager who knows where and when to look (M. Horneby writes). Here are the most abundant:

Blackberry (Rubus fruticosus): Where: widespread in bramble bushes in woods, hedges, waste places and heaths. When: August to early October. Cost up to £8 a lb in shops.

Bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus): Where: widespread on heaths and moors, except in southern and eastern England. Low shrubs with small, tiny, black fruit often hidden in heather. When: July to September. "Mushy-mouth pies" made from bilberries are a Yorkshire speciality. Not easily found in shops.

Hazelnut (Corylus avellana): Where: abundant in woods, hedgerows and scrubland, except in very damp areas. When: late August to October. Chopped or grated nuts make tasty addition to salads. Can also be used to make hazelnut bread. Cost up to £2.40 a lb in shops.

Sweet chestnut (Castanea sativa): Where: common in England, mainly in woods and parks. Green cases of nuts have long, prickly spines that irritate the skin. When: June to September. Young shoots make tangy salad vegetables. Whole plants can be eaten like asparagus. Fishmongers charge up to £3 a lb as garnish for fish.

Mare's ear (Thlaspi arvense): Where: common in England, mainly in damp areas. When: June to September. Young shoots make tangy salad vegetables. Whole plants can be eaten like asparagus. Fishmongers charge up to £3 a lb as garnish for fish.

Horseshoe (Amaranthus retrofractus): Where: common in England, mainly in damp areas. When: June to September. Young shoots make tangy salad vegetables. Whole plants can be eaten like asparagus. Fishmongers charge up to £3 a lb as garnish for fish.

Garlic mustard or Jack-by-the-hedge (Alliaria petiolata): Where: abundant on edges of woods and hedge banks. When: leaves sometimes seen as early as February with second crop in September and October. Chopped leaves can be used like mint to garnish lamb. Much less pungent than ordinary garlic. Not found in shops.

Wild cherry (Prunus avium): Where: widespread and common in hedgerows and woods, especially beech. Tall tree with shiny, red-brown bark and abundance of white flowers in spring. When: late May to early June. Fruit ready for picking late summer. Can taste either sweet or bitter. Not sold in shops.

Sloe (Prunus spinosa): Where: grows as dark, marble-sized fruit on buckthorn, widespread and abundant in woods and hedgerows. When: best picked for sloe gin after first autumn frost which makes skins softer and more permeable. Gin made then should be ready by Christmas. Too tart and acid to eat raw.

Singing nettle (Urtica dioica): Where: widely abundant. When: leaves should not be picked later than beginning of June; young leaves are best. Leaves make good soup when boiled, reduced to a sauce and mixed with butter, fish, salt, pepper and milk.

Source: Food for Free by Richard Mabey, published by HarperCollins

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Germans gloss over Hitler's Berlin

The dark heart of the city is being rehabilitated, Roger Boyes writes



Hitler discusses a new administration building in Weimar with Albert Speer, second left, in 1936

The German Government starts to pack its bags this year for the great trek from Bonn to Berlin and is preparing to move, without a ripple of criticism, into buildings associated with the darkest days of Hitler's Third Reich.

The Foreign Ministry will be drafting Germany's future policies in the Reichsbank, the Nazi central bank where the plundered gold and assets of Europe were gathered. The Ministry for the Family will make do with bits of Goebbels' former Propaganda Ministry. Defence planners will place their new desks in the Bendlerblock where the German Army high command plotted the invasion of the east.

Goering's Air Ministry will provide useful office space for Germany's financial experts.

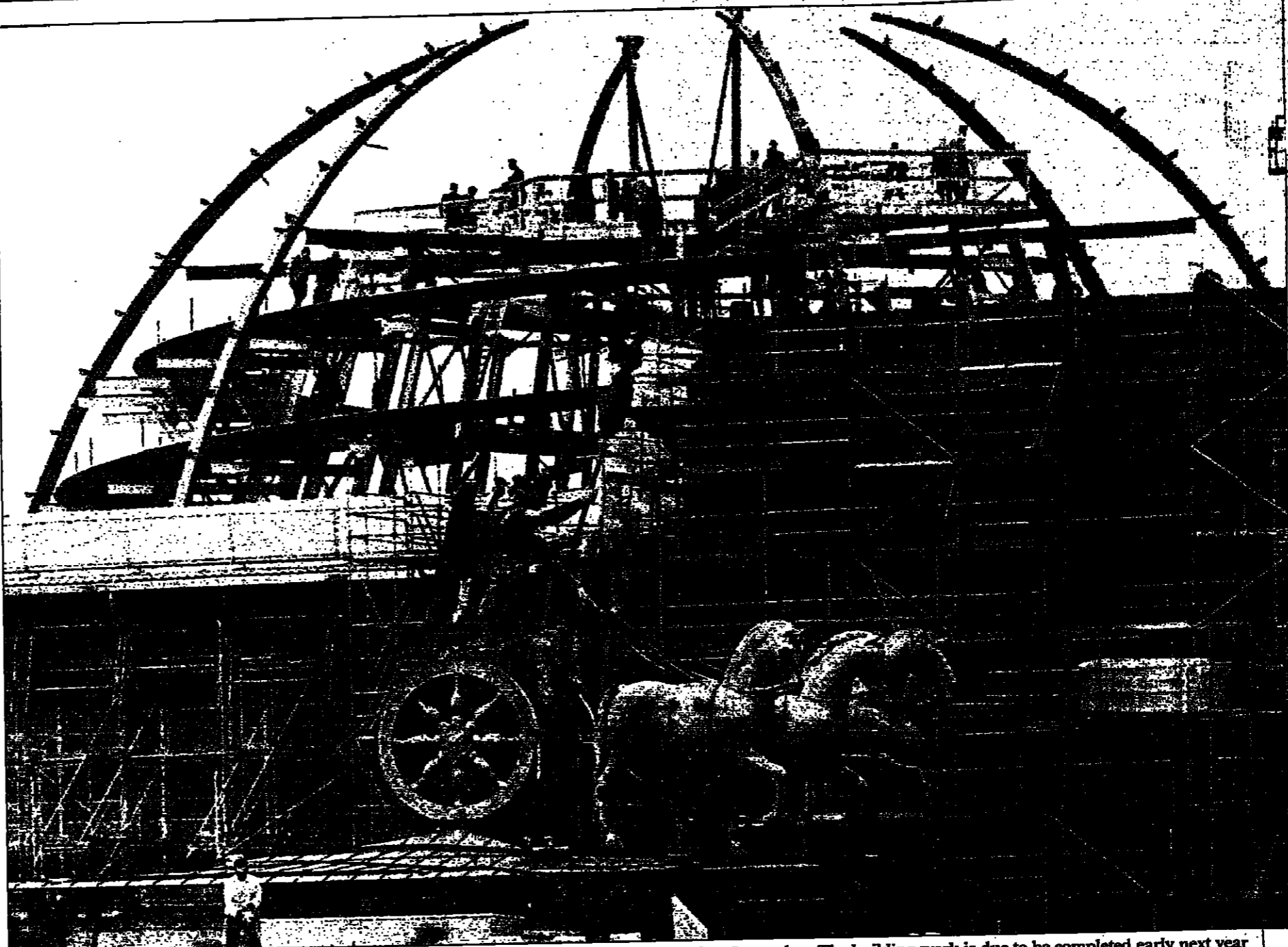
There is something unsettling about this seamless takeover of the architecture of tyranny. Some offices, such as those of the Chancellor, will be built from scratch. The chancellery under construction in one of the world's best-guard-

ed building sites will be a colonnaded edifice with a tall central block that has already been dubbed the Eye of the Chancellor.

A new beginning then for Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor — or his successor — but he could hardly have been expected to move into the ruins of Hitler's bunker. Private business, led by Sony and Daimler, has carefully skirted the bunker as they develop Potsdamer Platz where dozens of cranes punctuate the skyline.

Some 300 billion marks (£103 billion) is being ploughed over ten years into making Berlin a fitting new capital by the end of the year. In the spring of 1999, the German Parliament should be convening in the Reichstag which has been redesigned by Sir Norman Foster, one of several British architects taking part in the rebuilding of the German metropolis.

It is the lack of public money, and the rush to be up and running by the millennium, that is prompting the



The topping-out ceremony for Sir Norman Foster's dome on the revamped Reichstag last September. The building work is due to be completed early next year

present compromises with the past. Moving old or building new capitals has traditionally been a lengthy process. It took 17 years to build Canberra in Australia, decades to make Washington.

Charles Dickens, visiting Washington 30 years after the British sacked the White House, observed: "Leave a brick field without the bricks in all the central places where a street might be expected; and that's Washington." The comment could equally well apply to today's Berlin.

Hence the readiness to set up in Nazi buildings: they are intact and, above all, they are cheap. The question is if this is not a fatal compromise with history. James Fenton, in his poem *The War Requiem*,

writes: "It is not the houses. It is the spaces between the houses" — the forgotten remnants of war damage. But this is no longer a completely satisfactory metaphor for Germany's selective recall.

The new Berlin, Germans assume, will be the capital of the new Europe, a Europe that looks east as well as west. The mission carries with it some historical responsibilities and at the very least a sensitive memory. Some critics say it is not enough to pour concrete over the former no man's land between East and West Germany and pronounce dead all connections with the unpleasant past.

Modern planning of Berlin, still an ugly city, was given a bad name by Hitler's dreams

of converting it to a monumental capital to be called Germania.

"Germania will be a new, a bigger Berlin," said Goebbels. "It will give a greater Germany a new and a happy future."

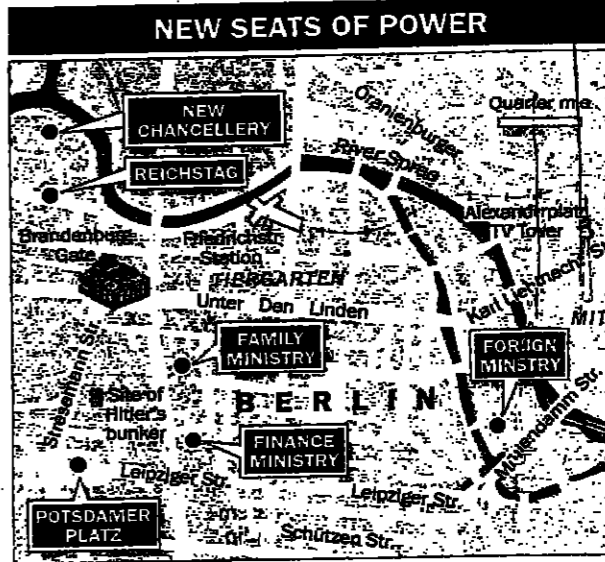
Albert Speer was commissioned to build a People's Hall, capable of housing 180,000 party delegates; north-south and east-west axis roads were supposed to cross in the Tiergarten district. Visitors to the southern station in Berlin should be "overcome by the spectacle of urban planning", wrote Speer.

Herr Kohl's Berlin is obviously different. He has been rejecting designs (including a Holocaust memorial) as too "monumental". And although

the Lehrter station is to be converted into the major Berlin rail centre, observers point out that it will be mainly designed to provide a quick escape from the city for parliamentarians whose hearts beat elsewhere in the German provinces.

But Daniel Gössler, one of Germany's most talented younger architects, says something is seeping away. In 1990, he says, Berlin was one of the few cities that symbolised the remembrance of war: the 50-year-old overgrown bomb rubble, the scarred facades, the Cold War division of the city. Now, he says, these traces are being eliminated.

Buildings, of course, have to be viewed with some pragmatism. I write with the authority



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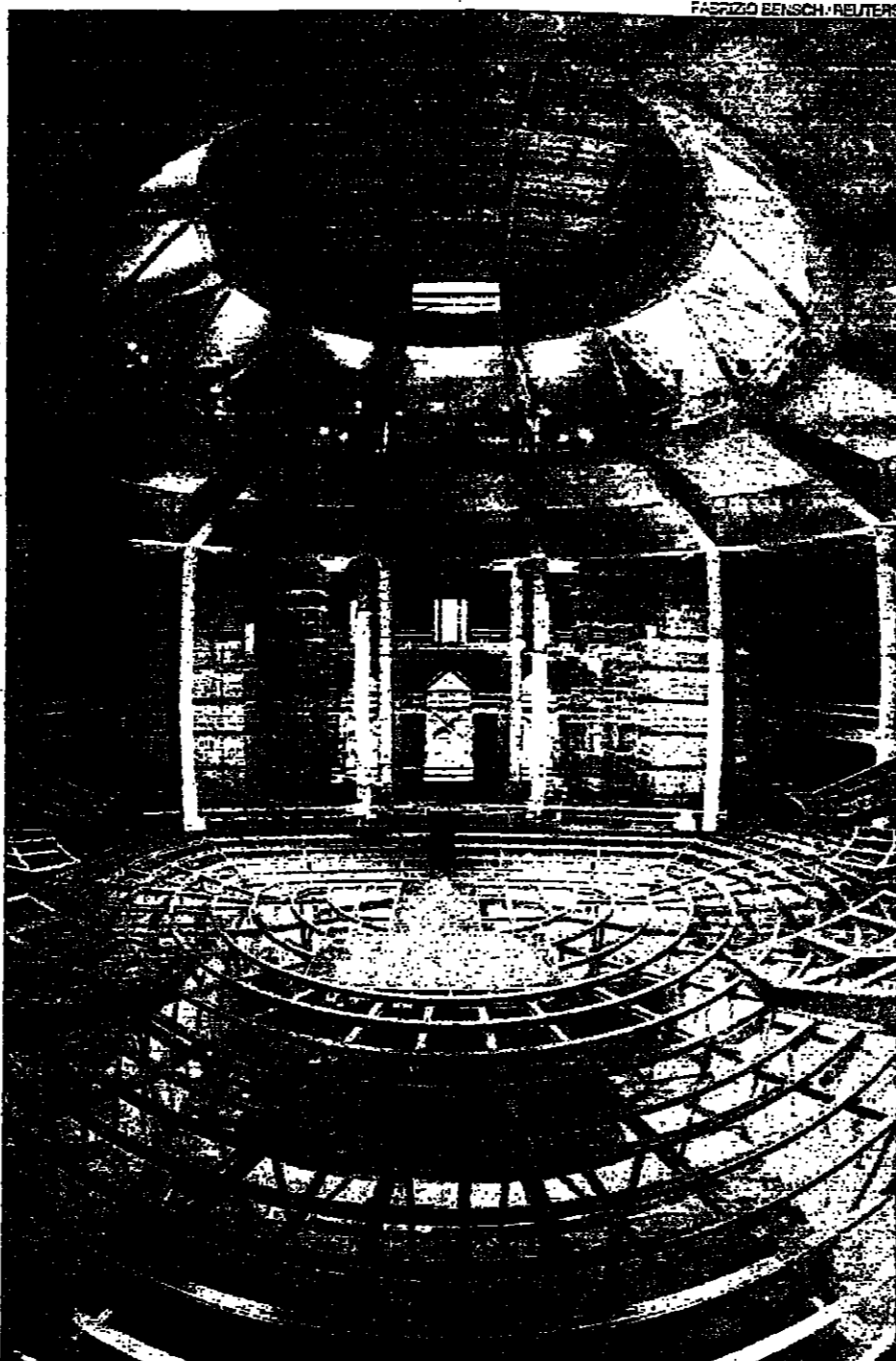
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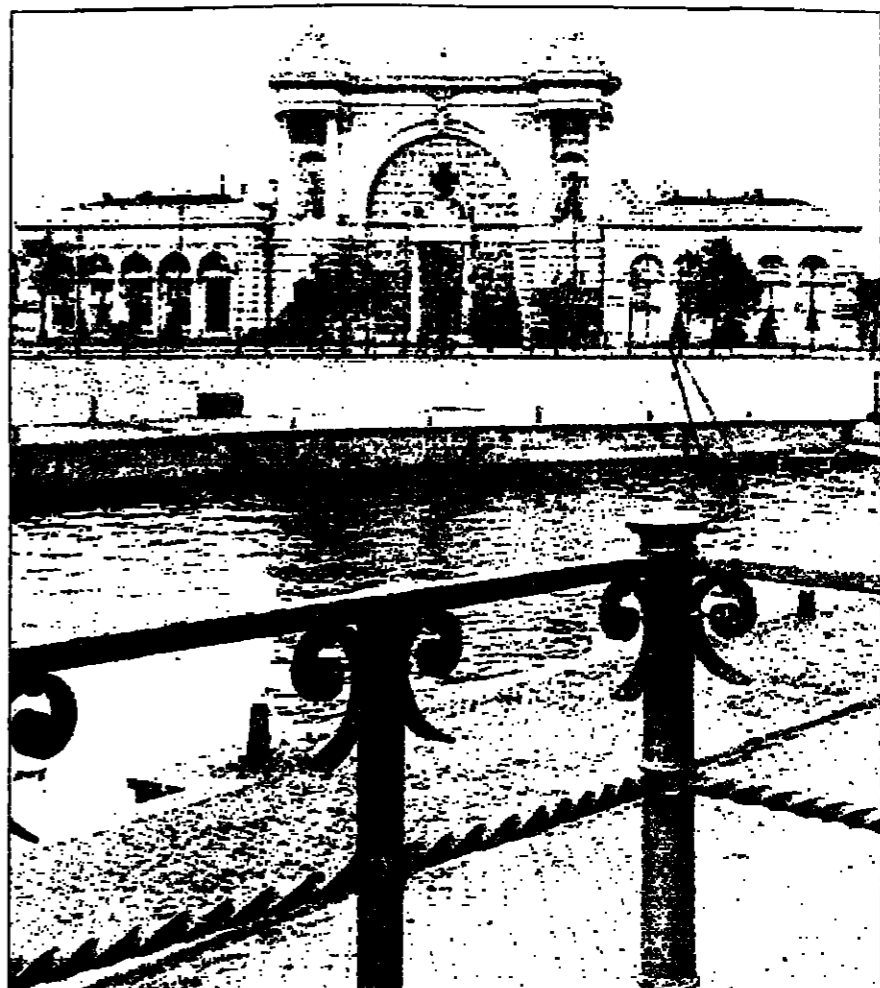
Rita Süssmuth, parliamentary speaker, with Foster



Helmut Kohl turns the first sod for the new German chancellery while construction continues on the plenum hall of the Reichstag



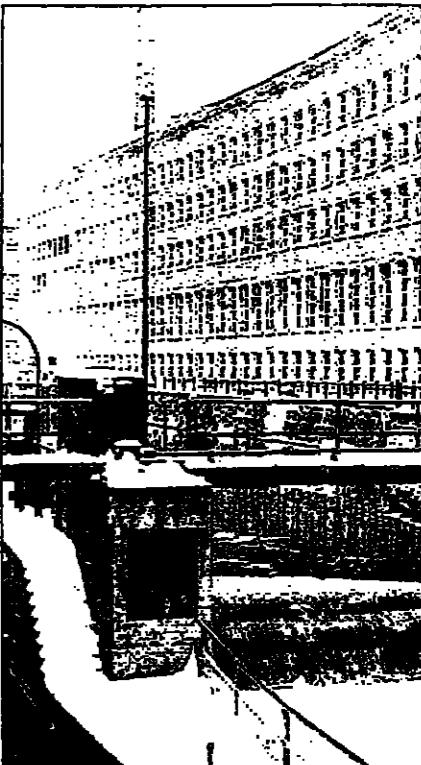
NEW PLANS AHEAD FOR ARCHITECTURE OF TYRANNY



The Lehrter station, which is to be converted into Berlin's main rail centre



The Foreign Ministry will occupy the Reichsbank, left, and the monumental former Air Ministry building will provide office space for financial experts



of someone who has an apartment in Poland that was once inhabited by a Gestapo family. Architects and designers are trying to make subtle distinctions between the buildings as they were and as they are currently being used. Sir Norman's dom will flood the Reichstag with light. The Defence Ministry courtyard will be used to commemorate officers who were led for trying to overthrow Hitler. It is worth visiting the future German Foreign Ministry to understand the new-old image that will be projected by the building. The Reichsbank, like so much of the new Berlin construction day — was put

out to an architectural contest whose entrants included Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. But this was 1934 and Hitler's favourite, Heinrich Wolff, won the race and constructed a block that resembles a giant safety deposit box. It has a thousand rooms and can put up 2,000 diplomats complete with the obligatory office machines. Some corridors are gracefully curved as in an ocean liner. After the war it was taken over by the East German Communists. But the giant steel vaults that once contained Holocaust gold are still there, like a dark secret, in the basement. Buildings, put together

properly and spared the destruction of bombs, survive regimes. It is perhaps too harsh, too radical to suggest that nobody ever works again in an office used by Nazis. But the Kohl Government, in its sprint to establish a new capital, could have paused for a moment of public exorcism, for there are too many ghosts in the pits and tunnels of Europe's largest building site. Throw a can over a fence in Potsdamer Platz and you will wait in vain for the sound of it landing: The holes have been dug deep, as if mimicking Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. In fact Berlin has set a course for the centre of the Continent.

SPEER: FÜHRER'S TAME DESIGNER

Albert Speer was one of the great enigmas of the Third Reich leadership. Hitler singled him out at the age of 32, impressed by Speer's contribution to the design of the area where the dramatic Nuremberg rallies were staged. Appointed General Building Inspector for Berlin in 1937, Speer's brief was to make a permanent parade ground out of the city and to out-trump Paris and Vienna for elegance. Instead, he pandered to Hitler's love of the gigantic. He served 20 years in prison after the war for using slave labour in weapons factories. On his release, in 1969, he published an apology, *Inside the Third Reich*, which convinced some readers that he was an intelligent man who had paid for his mistakes. Critics, however, demonstrated that he was involved in the deportation of Berlin Jews and other crimes. His plans for Berlin were supposed to be realised by 1950. Instead, the diversion of resources to the war and a sheer folly of architectural ambition ensured that only a few institutional Nazi buildings were built and most were destroyed in the war. Speer died in 1982.

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SONY 14" Colour TV Model 14F1. Was £199.99. In-store Price £199.99. **SALE PRICE** £40. **VOUCHER PRICE** £159.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER!

GRUNDIG 21" N1CAM Stereo TV Model 2102. Was £239.99. In-store Price £239.99. **SALE PRICE** £90. **VOUCHER PRICE** £239.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER!

EXTRA DISCOUNT

HITACHI 25" N1CAM Stereo TV Model 25F1. Was £449.99. In-store Price £449.99. **SALE PRICE** £130. **VOUCHER PRICE** £349.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER!

EXTRA DISCOUNT

SANYO 25" N1CAM Stereo TV Model 25M1. Was £449.99. In-store Price £449.99. **SALE PRICE** £70. **VOUCHER PRICE** £379.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER!

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MATSUI 25" N1CAM Stereo TV Model 25F1. Was £449.99. In-store Price £449.99. **SALE PRICE** £50. **VOUCHER PRICE** £449.99. BUY NOW PAY 6 MONTHS LATER!

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HOOPER 1000 Watt Cylinder Model 1000. Was £119.99. In-store Price £119.99. **SALE PRICE** £70. **VOUCHER PRICE** £69.99.

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ELECTROLUX 1000 Watt Cylinder Model 1105G. Was £119.99. In-store Price £119.99. **SALE PRICE** £50. **VOUCHER PRICE** £109.99.

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PANASONIC 0.8 cu.ft. Microwave Model M105. Was £129.99. In-store Price £129.99. **SALE PRICE** £20. **VOUCHER PRICE** £79.99.

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Cuba tries short cut to tailor economy

LONG used to belt-tightening, Cuban schoolchildren are now being told they cannot wear trousers any more.

School children aged ten to 11 are to be required to wear shorts to save on cloth from the start of the next school year, according to the Communist Party daily, *Granma*. The Bermuda-style shorts are "better suited to fashion and climate of our country", the newspaper said.

But the main reason for the shorter trouser length, it added, was that it would enable state tailors to run off 28,000 more new uniforms from the extra material saved.

The return of the Christmas holidays for the first time in three decades, and the visit of the Pope later this month, may have encouraged Cubans to feel that life was looking up. But Cuba's economic recovery is moving at a pace slower than hoped for.

Carlos Lage, Cuba's Vice-President, said recently the economy grew about 2.5 per cent last year, despite the United States embargo and a poor sugar harvest, the main cash crop. "I believe we can feel satisfied that we concluded the year ... with an economy that maintained its recovery pace, though not like in previous years," he said.

Exports last year increased only 0.6 per cent due to the sugar problems, and although tourism earnings rose to more than \$1.5 billion (£900 million), that was below expectations. Foreign investment rose by 7 per cent last year, 3 per cent below government estimates, according to the US-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, a New York-based group that provides financial information on Cuba.

On the bright side, Cuba is hoping to turn a profit from the Pope's visit. Posters showing President Castro and the Pope together, taken at their only previous meeting in the Vatican in 1996, are already on sale for \$4.50 - about half the average monthly salary for most Cubans. There are commemorative postcards for \$1, and a specially minted coin of the two men for \$40.

The Pope's visit could result in a \$20 million windfall for the island's economy, the New York-based council said. "Hotels in the cities where the Pope will visit ... are increasing their daily rates by nearly 100 per cent and prices at restaurants, for domestic air-line flights and vehicle rentals are almost certain to increase as well," it reported in a recent bulletin.

Cuba also reportedly wants to charge US television networks up to \$100,000 to film the Pope celebrating Mass at four open-air events during his five-day tour of the island.

Sluggish growth forces Havana to trim back in schools, writes David Adams

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Armed Israeli police shelter from the wind on the walls of Jerusalem yesterday as they guard tens of thousands of Arab worshippers marking the first Friday of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month (Ross Dunn writes). The future of the Israeli Government and the Middle East peace process, meanwhile, hung in the balance when Israeli Foreign Minister, David Levy, refused to withdraw his resignation threat. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, said he would spend the weekend trying to persuade Mr Levy to change his mind. Mr Netanyahu postponed a vote on the annual budget until at least Monday after Mr Levy threatened on Thursday to quit unless more benefits were given to the poor and unemployed. However, the Prime Minister may have to choose between Mr Levy and

Netanyahu faces budget crisis

Mr Levy's resignation and the threatened withdrawal of support of his five-member Geshet Party would have placed the future of the Government and the peace process in doubt. Mr Netanyahu yesterday asked for a postponement of the visit by Dennis Ross, the US special envoy, expected on Monday.

Yaakov Neeman, the Finance Minister, who said he would resign if the Government breached the budget ceiling. Mr Levy's resignation and the threatened withdrawal of support of his five-member Geshet Party would have placed the future of the Government and the peace process in doubt. Mr Netanyahu yesterday asked for a postponement of the visit by Dennis Ross, the US special envoy, expected on Monday.

Avian flu tests for rats, cats and dogs

By James Pringle

DOGS, cats and rats were being tested in Hong Kong yesterday for the lethal avian flu virus, as officials admitted that scavenging animals had eaten chickens from sacks of slaughtered birds before they could be disposed off.

As the government admitted shortcomings in the operation to kill 1.3 million chickens, ducks and other birds, it was announced that a boy aged three had become the latest confirmed case of the mysterious H5N1 avian influenza which has killed four people and infected 15 others, with a further six suspected cases. He was said to be in a satisfactory condition.

The latest case followed confirmation on Thursday that a girl aged 14 has the virus. Her condition was also said yesterday to be satisfactory.

A Hong Kong university microbiologist, Professor Ken Shortridge, responsible for assessing if dogs, cats and rats were susceptible to the virus, said he wanted to take a "wide look at all possibilities".

At present Professor Shortridge's tests involve a few hundred samples taken from areas around the massive Cheung Sha Wan poultry market. Television pictures seen in Hong Kong showed a dog tearing open a black plastic bag containing slaughtered chickens and appearing to eat some of its contents. Rats and dogs were reportedly found near bags of chicken carcasses left on roadsides for collection and disposal.

Other reports said live chickens had been seen near housing projects, and that other chickens were still alive in more remote farms in the New Territories which border mainland China.

Tung Chee-hwa, the Hong Kong Chief Executive, has admitted there were "inadequacies" in the slaughter operation. Colleagues in the government at all levels had worked day and night, but there were areas where improvement was needed.

Leslie Wei, Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, said it would take up to ten days to see if the mass slaughter of chickens and other poultry had been successful in ending the spread of the virus.

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Baldwin	£82	Banbury	Whitby Hall	£196
Basingstoke	£86	Bath	St John's	£228
Belfast	£82	Bath	The Priory	£178
Berkeley	£90	Blackpool	The Imperial	£165
Birmingham	£86	Bristol	The Brandon Hall	£110
Birmingham Airport	£90	Cambridge	Trinity Hall	£118
Birmingham City	£86	Canterbury	Clauze Hotel	£124
Bolton	£80	Chesham	The Queen's	£140
Bromsgrove	£92	Cherter	Blossoms	£116
Bromwich	£102	Dorchester	The Dartington	£178
Brighouse	£82	Dorking	The White Horse	£116
Cambridge	£100	Dorchester	Peew of the Post	£140
Cardiff	£90	Doncaster	The Lutzel Arms	£118
Cardiff City	£96	Exeter	The Southgate	£100
Cardis	£96	Farnham	The Bush	£110
Cherter	£92	Forest of Dean	Spetch House	£108
Chesham	£88	Gloucester	The Grosvenor	£118
Coventry	£90	Halesowen	The Black Swan	£104
Coventry	£82	Harefield	The Green Dragon	£116
Croydon	£82	Hartingfordbury	The White Horse	£140
Derby/Barton	£82	Lavenham	The Swan	£152
Dover	£82	Leeds	The Queen's Hotel	£120
Dublin Airport	£110	Lincoln	The White Horse	£118
Edinburgh	£82	Long Melford	The Bull	£128
Epping	£84	Marlborough	The Castle & Bell	£120
Farnham	£94	Marlow	Complete Angler	£140
Farnborough	£84	Matlock Bath	New Bath Hotel	£108
Gasgow	£92	Marlow	Anchor Hotel	£128
Glasgow Airport	£72	North Berwick	The Marine	£118
Glasgow City	£82	Northampton	The Talbot	£118
Gloicester	£82	Orford	Sagehill Hotel	£150
Grimsby	£76	Orford	The Randolph	£168
Guildford	£104	Pedmore	The Metropole	£104
Havant	£84	Ramsey	The White Horse	£108
Haydock	£88	Rose-on-Wye	The Royal	£122
Hemel Hempstead	£84	Salisbury	Salisbury Court	£118
High Wycombe	£80	Sheffield	The Garrison	£118
Hull	£80	Salisbury	The White Hart	£106
Hull Marina	£80	Shearwater	The Shearwater	£142
Ilkeston	£80	Southwell	The Saracen's Head	£88
Ilkeston	£80	St Andrews	Russias	£110
Leeds/City	£82	Stratford	The Abingdon	£118
Leeds/Sailor	£76	Stratford	The Shakespeare	£108
Leicester	£82	Sturford	The Bell	£108
Lincoln	£82	Tansey	The Imperial	£108
Liverpool	£82	Ulverston	Levens Hall	£108
Luton	£72	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Malden/Sevenoaks	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Manchester	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Manchester Airport	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Millton Keynes	£102	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Norwich	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Nottingham City	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Nottingham/Derby	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Nottingham	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Plymouth	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Plymouth	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Preston	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Reading	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Reading	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Rugby/Northampton	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Sheffield	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Southampton	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
Southampton/Eastleigh	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
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Stoke-on-Trent	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
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Warrington	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108
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Worcester	£82	Walsley	The Wagon	£108

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WORLD IN BRIEF

Demand for new poll as Moi 'wins'

Nairobi: The two leading Opposition contenders in Kenya's presidential elections have rejected as "rigged" election results giving President Moi almost certain victory and have called for a new vote within three weeks (Inigo Gilmore writes). Provisional results gave Mr Moi nearly 2.1 million votes, about 400,000 more than his nearest rival, Mwai Kibaki of the Democratic Party and Raila Odinga of the National Development Party said Mr Moi was making arrangements to swear himself in as President before the entire voting and counting process had been completed and condemned international observers for failing to prevent abuses. Britain has already condemned the conduct of the chaotic elections.

Visit off in Kaunda protest

Britain yesterday cancelled a visit by Tony Lloyd, a Foreign Office minister, to Zambia in protest at the continued house arrest of Kenneth Kaunda, the former President (Michael Binyon writes). In Lusaka, Dr Kaunda appeared yesterday in the High Court to contest the decision to arrest him, but the hearing was adjourned until next Tuesday.

Fire and flood in Fifth Avenue

New York: Fifth Avenue was closed to traffic after a water main broke, flooding the road and creating a pocket of natural gas that was still burning yesterday morning in central Manhattan. The gas flames were burning three storeys high, but fire officials said there was no danger of an explosion, adding that it was just a matter of time before the accumulated gas had burnt off. (AFP)

Popocatepetl erupts again

Mexico City: Mexico's Popocatepetl volcano, which erupted 31 times in 1997, has erupted again, spewing out a massive gas cloud and setting off tremors reaching 3.3 on the Richter scale. The boom of the eruption could be heard in Puebla, 20 miles away, where ash rained on the streets. A major eruption would threaten 500,000 people living near the volcano. (Reuters)

Under-sevens in sex attacks

Auckland: Social workers are shocked by reports that out of 78 children under the age of seven suspended from school last year, five had sexually assaulted other pupils and three were taking drugs. Mike Doolan, chief social worker with the Children, Young Persons and their Families Service, said he was "staggered" by the figures. (AFP)

Computer hitch on Mir

Moscow: Russia's ageing Mir space station, which was plagued with problems last year, suffered a fault in its main computer that triggered a loss of power yesterday. Mission Control said the vessel's gyroscopically controlled solar panels had stopped tracking the Sun, but the station's three-man Russian-American crew were working normally in the main module. (Reuters)

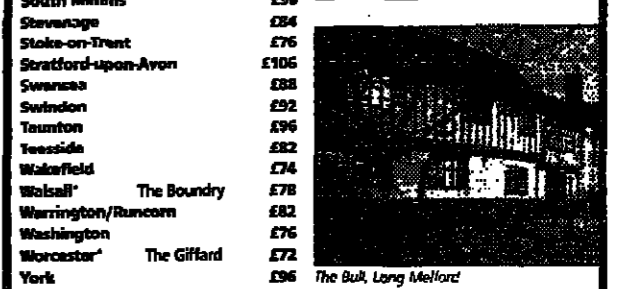
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Ulan Bator: Mongolia's workers are having their first regular weekend off since the Communist revolution of 1921. The remote nation, which rejected the Communist Party in elections in 1996, adopted a 40-hour, five-day working week from January 1. They previously worked 46 hours, with six on Saturday. (Reuters)

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Mia closes her file on Woody

MIA FARROW, Woody Allen's lover for 12 years and the mother of his child, vows to make no public comment — ever — on his marriage to her adopted daughter, Soon-Yi. Instead, she is referring calls to Dr Stephen Herman, a child psychiatrist. Unlike most New Yorkers, Dr Herman is reluctant to psychoanalyse the famously neurotic author. But he delivers a stern lecture about the impact of his near-incest.

"It is not funny. It cannot be apologised for and explained away in a movie," the doctor says. "It is way beyond the

JAMES BONE'S NEW YORK



bounds, not so much of morality and decency, but of what is acceptable for adults to do to children."

Farrow made clear in her recent autobiography that she blames herself for ignoring Allen's flaws. As if to exorcise

his influence, she has renamed their son Sachell as Seamus and their adopted daughter Dylan as Eliza. She is now said to be involved with novelist Philip Roth, author of *Portnoy's Complaint*. That is another irony in this Freudian case study, for Roth was himself denounced in the autobiography of his estranged wife, the British actress Claire Bloom.

Allen has just delivered his new film, *Deconstructing Harry*, in which he plays a scatty writer who sleeps with his wife's sister and then tells the story in a novel.

It may not be as autobiographical as it first appears. Some critics suggest the main character is based not on Woody Allen but on Roth.



Woody Allen kissing his new bride, Soon-Yi



Mia Farrow: no comment on the marriage of her ex-lover to her adopted daughter

Soup Nazi cheers as TV show is liquidated



DeGeneres cover girl

AT LEAST one New Yorker is delighted by the demise of television's *Seinfeld*, which became the decade's most popular sitcom by mocking the foibles of the city's residents. He is Al Yeganeh, the proprietor of Soup Kitchen International on West 55th Street.

Mr Yeganeh was immortalised by the comedy as the "Soup Nazi" who routinely refused to serve customers he did not like. "*Seinfeld* uses people like me and destroys their feelings to get ratings, so of course I am happy he is going off the air," he says.

Nevertheless, the notoriety has been good for business. Tourists queue up outside every day for a cup of soup and their share of verbal abuse. Mr Yeganeh gets very, very angry if they ask him to repeat the now famous line: "No soup for you!"

NEW YORK is once again the darling of Hollywood. Last year officials granted permits for a total of 21,000 hours of filming on city streets. Expect to see the Big Apple playing soon at a cinema near you.

The impending arrival of a new British editor has sparked a battle of the sexes at America's best-selling gay magazine. James Collard, editor of the London-based *Attitude*, moves to New York this week to take over the always controversial monthly *Out* — now renamed "Onst" by angry women.

The glossy swings, both ways. Its reporting on gay male themes is matched by articles of lesbian interest. Like a cover-story on sitcom star Ellen DeGeneres.

The ousted editor is a lesbian named Sarah Pettit. She claims the magazine is in danger of being taken over by male homosexuals.

It was "bottoms up" at the B. Bar on the Bowery for its annual Nude Year's party. Club kids and aspiring supermodels checked their clothes at the door for a four-course meal and salsa dancing. The bashful were allowed to don swimwear.

Kennedys ignored ski patrol's warnings

BY IAN BRODIE

THE perilous game of ski football that claimed the life of Michael Kennedy was widely reported yesterday to have been a Kennedy family tradition for more than 30 years. The Kennedys were said to have been given warnings in the past by the ski patrol in Aspen, Colorado, that football and skiing were a dangerous combination, but the cautions were ignored.

Fiercely competitive and energetic games of touch football have been a feature of family gatherings ever since John Kennedy was President. Ski football was added after the late Senator Robert Kennedy, Michael's father, began taking his family to Aspen in 1962.

A family friend who is an experienced skier told *The New York Times* he had once been invited to join the game, but after watching how ski football was played he was scared off.

"It is very, very dangerous," the friend said. "They divide the mountain into fields with the next goal being a tree or a sign. Whoever gets to the ball, gets a point and throws the ball again." Describing the family's enthusiasm, the friend said: "It is Kennedyesque. There is a lot of laughing, vigour, excitement and a big rush."

The players, numbering up to two dozen, hand their ski poles to others to take down the mountain. They wait at the top until late in the afternoon when everyone else is off the slopes. By then, conditions are more hazardous because the well-skied slopes are shaded and turning to ice.

Most accounts said the family was using a snow-packed water bottle as a football.

Michael, an expert skier, reached out for a pass, caught the bottle, but then slammed head first into a tree, suffering massive injuries. During the downhill run, he had also been videotaping the game.

Michael was described by a close family friend as having "lost an edge", meaning one ski slid from under him, perhaps on a patch of ice, throwing him off balance.

Ethel Kennedy, Michael's mother, helped to organise the game and arranged for the makeshift football to be taken up the mountain, according to a source quoted by the *New York Post*.

It was not clear whether she saw Michael's accident. Another of her sons, Max, injured a knee playing ski football in Aspen two years ago. The day before Michael died, the game had been played with an orange and plastic drinks bottle.

Officials in Aspen, a magnet for celebrities and the well-to-do, released only the barest

details about Michael's death. They did say that initial tests showed there were no traces of drugs or alcohol in his body. Michael had said last year he was being treated for alcoholism after revelations of his affair with his children's babysitter that started when she was 14.

Wrapped in a grey blanket, the body was flown across the country by chartered plane to Massachusetts where the family gathered, as so often in the past, to grieve at their compound in Hyannis Port, south of Boston.

Two wakes were being held yesterday at Ethel Kennedy's house in the compound, one in the afternoon and the second in the evening.

The funeral will be held today at a Roman Catholic church near Hyannis Port, followed by burial close to the graves of Michael Kennedy's grandparents, Joseph and Rose Kennedy, and his brother, David, who died of a drug overdose.



Senator Edward Kennedy arriving at the family compound in Hyannis Port for his nephew's wake

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Delusion 'is key to bliss' in marriage

BY JAMES BONE

IN A blow to marriage therapists, a new study is challenging the wisdom that a successful union between a man and a woman depends on frank and open communication.

A University of Florida survey, involving several hundred couples in the Los Angeles area, found that self-delusion may be a more accurate indicator of a successful marriage than good communication or truthfulness.

Over four years the researchers concluded that those who felt most satisfied often remembered the past as worse than it was in order to make the present seem better by comparison.

The finding punctures a central tenet of the marriage-counselling industry in which therapists help couples to communicate better with each other about their problems.

"The advice to husbands and wives to communicate better puts a lot of pressure and blame on couples," said Professor Benjamin Karney. "It says, 'If only you communicated better, you'd be happy.' I don't think that's true, nor does the research show it to be true."

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Times Christmas Appeal: medical and animal charities benefit from readers' generosity

£100,000 raised for prostate cancer research

By Nigel Hawkes and Philip Delves Broughton

THE Times Christmas Appeal for research into prostate cancer has comfortably exceeded its target, raising more than £100,000.

Yesterday staff at the Institute of Cancer Research were still dealing with donations that had been received over Christmas, but it is clear that the appeal has been a huge success. The original aim was £40,000 towards the cost of a gene sequencer to discover the gene that contribute to the development of prostate cancer.

Readers of *The Times* have also contributed nearly £20,000 to the Christmas charity appeal on behalf of the Born Free Foundation. This money, which is also still coming in, will be divided among the various animal projects reported in *The Times* over the course of the appeal, from the wild otters of Skye to the Orca whales of British Columbia, via Ethiopian wolves, South African lions, Kenyan elephants and the woolly monkeys of the Amazon.

Professor Peter Garland, chief executive of the Institute of Cancer Research, said that he and his colleagues had been overwhelmed by the generous response of *Times* readers to the organisation's everyman appeal.

"We will now purchase this essential piece of equipment and accelerate research into this neglected area of cancer research," he said. "May I take this opportunity to thank all those people who have supported the Institute of Can-

cer Research and its vital work."

At the institute's laboratory in Sutton, Surrey, the sophisticated gene sequencer will be used by Dr Ros Eeles and Dr David Dearnaley to try to identify genes responsible for prostate cancer. Although the disease is common, and causes 10,000 deaths annually, less than £1 million a year is spent on research into it, compared with £16 million on breast cancer research.

Two types of genes are being sought: high-risk genes, which are likely to exist in families that have suffered several cases of the disease, and lower-risk genes, which may be much commoner and responsible for more cases but which do not necessarily turn up in family studies because they confer only a small additional risk.

The money raised will go first towards buying a gene sequencer capable of analysing many more samples at once, vital when searching for a common gene in a large number of blood samples. It will cost more than £40,000, but Dr Eeles is confident that she can raise the rest from other sources, now that *Times* readers have provided such a good start.

Any money raised over the £40,000 target — at least £60,000, at present estimates — will go towards the everyman appeal's aim of raising £3 million for a dedicated male cancers research centre, which will focus on testicular as well as prostate cancers.



Two of five Siberian tigers rescued from an Italian circus over Christmas by the Born Free Foundation; and, below, Dr Ros Eeles, who will be using the sophisticated gene sequencer at the Institute of Cancer Research



Born Free Foundation (BFF) will be spent on much-needed equipment, medicine, where necessary, and the direct funding of animal sanctuaries, such as the Big Cat Sanctuary near Ashford in Kent, which is looking after five tigers previ-

ously held in captivity in Italy, lions from Athens and a de-clawed leopard that had been kept on show in a bar in Tenerife. In accordance with the foundation's core beliefs, it is hoped that all these animals will one day be returned to

their natural habitats in the wild. Will Travers, the chief executive of the foundation and son of its founders, Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna, the stars of the film *Born Free*, said: "For people to find extra resources and time over Christmas to help out the Born Free Foundation is great. We are all extremely grateful."

For the foundation, however, the fundraising never stops. At the moment two runners, Nick Bourne, 27, from London, and Chris Rainbow, 30, from Lincolnshire, are preparing to run the length of Africa from Cape Town to Cairo to raise £1 million for the BFF and the Save the Children Fund. Red tape

and organisational difficulties have so far blighted their attempts to make a start, but they should be under way very soon. Sponsorship forms for anyone who would like to support their effort can be obtained from the foundation.

Many will have seen the television programme broadcast by BBC1 on New Year's Day, *Born To Be Wild*, in which the comedy actor Martin Clunes helped to move an elephant, Nina, across Kenya with the BFF. In one year the foundation receives about £500,000 in contributions. *Times* readers have given a healthy chunk of that and its impact will be of great benefit to the many animals cared for.

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For details of membership, animal adoptions and projects, visit BFF's Web-site at: <http://web.ubonline.co.uk/bornfree>

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If more than the £40,000 required for the gene sequencer is raised through this Christmas appeal, it will go directly to other vital prostate cancer research at the Institute of Cancer Research.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

More parents name their babies Diana

THE number of babies named Diana rose markedly in the weeks after the death of the Princess of Wales, it was disclosed yesterday.

For most of last year an average of three babies a month were named Diana but in September the number was 26, according to the Office for National Statistics. Diana remained outside the top 50 girls' names for 1997, however, with Chloe at number one, followed by Emily and Sophie. For boys, Jack is the most popular name for the third year running.

Thanks perhaps to a couple in *EastEnders* calling their fictional daughter Courtney, and to the *improved* lounge of the rock star Courtney Love, that name appears in the top 50 for the first time, at number 20. Other additions to the girls' list include the names Ella, Caitlin and Jasmine, while Gemma, Stephanie, Katherine, Abbie and Jodie have lost favour.

There was much less change in the list of boys' names: the only new entries being Brandon and Joe, replacing Dominic and Sean in the top 50.

The information was compiled from names of babies born last year and added to the National Health Service Central Register up to December 15, which holds details of people in England and Wales. The most popular babies' names remain traditional, with boys' names often derived from the Bible and girls' having rather more diverse origins.

BOYS	GIRLS
1..... Jack	1..... Chloe
2..... James	2..... Emily
3..... Thomas	3..... Sophie
4..... Daniel	4..... Jessica
5..... Joshua	5..... Megan
6..... Matthew	6..... Hannah
7..... Samuel	7..... Rebecca
8..... Joseph	8..... Lauren
9..... Ryan	9..... Charlotte
10..... Jordan	10..... Georgia
11..... Luke	11..... Amy
12..... Connor	12..... Lucy
13..... Liam	13..... Emma
14..... Benjamin	14..... Bethany
15..... Callum	15..... Katie
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20..... Adam	20..... Courtney

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Tinseltown reels in the cash

Record earnings mark a reversal of fortunes for Hollywood, writes Giles Whittell

There have been huge flops. There has been woe at Warner Brothers. But a year after the big studios were being written off as out of touch and incapable of winning Oscars, their executives may be excused a smug "Hooray for Hollywood".



LA Confidential and Jodie Foster, in Contact, helped Hollywood to record receipts last year

Even before the release of the year's two most anticipated blockbusters, the total earned at the US box office in 1997 passed the previous year's record of \$5.76 billion (£3.6 billion). This tide of cash marked a banner year at the cinema for disasters, detectives, horror, homosexuals and all things British except Bond.

Four of the five most-nominated films for next month's 1998 Golden Globe awards, including *LA Confidential*, are big-budget studio productions, reversing last year's triumph for independent films such as *Shine*, *Slingblade*, *Fargo* and *The English Patient*.

Summer crowds voted with their feet for *Men in Black* (which earned \$249 million in the US alone) and *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* (\$220 million). The following month Harrison Ford proved again he is the industry's most bankable star. His turn as the kick-ass President in *Air Force One* earned \$171 million, and his return as Han Solo in the re-release of *Star Wars* brought in \$138 million on top of the \$322 million it had earned since 1977.

HOLLYWOOD FIGHTS BACK — GOLDEN GLOBE-NOMINATED DIRECTORS



James L. Brooks As Good as It Gets, James Cameron Titanic, Curtis Hanson LA Confidential, Jim Sheridan The Boxer, Steven Spielberg Amistad

Earlier last month teenagers swarmed to *Scream 2*, a cocktail of blood and mini-skirts aimed very precisely at a 15-18 year-old demographic bulge, but no film in this or any recent year has boosted Hollywood's ego more than *Titanic*.

Set early on by tales of poisoning and wild extravagance on its gigantic sets, James Cameron, *Titanic's* director, tried to defuse the bad publicity by calling his work in progress a "3190 million chick flick". In fact his bravura recreation of the century's most poetic disaster proved a return to the traditional strengths of American film: simple story-telling, meticulous realism and epic scale. It won eight Golden Globe nominations and is a favourite for the Oscars.

Myers, the brilliant *Austin Powers*, *International Man of Mystery*. Nor will Pierce Brosnan for *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

There are reports that Rupert Everett, a hot Hollywood property after his hilarious performance in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, is threatening to eclipse the Bond franchise with one featuring himself as a British secret agent as suave as 007, and gay.

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Whether it wins awards or not, *The Full Monty* broke the all-time UK box office record and went on to earn \$34 million in America. Even more remarkably, *Bean* made over \$100 million before reaching the US and another \$44 million once it opened here.

Rowan Atkinson, *Bean's* star, will not win an Oscar because the Motion Picture Academy rarely honours comedies. Nor will Mike

Myers, the brilliant *Austin Powers*, *International Man of Mystery*. Nor will Pierce Brosnan for *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

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John Travolta in Face/Off. Mad City earned him \$20 million



Titanic, the most expensive film, continues to set records

'Titanic' shows the value of disaster

ALTHOUGH *Titanic*, the most expensive film ever made, needs to rake in at least \$400 million in order to break even, its early showing has been strong enough to banish any fears of a loss that Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount might have had (Tunku Varadarajan writes).

Since its release on December 12, the film has taken \$104.8 million at the American box office, establishing several new records along the way.

Comics save best for end of year

TELEVISION Paul Hoggart decides to stay in for a laugh

As those childhood memories of New Year's Eve—old family friends, mince pies and mulled wine, church bells on the crisp Yorkshire air, first-footing with real anthracite. And all rounded off with the most infuriatingly boring television programmes of the entire year. I suspect Kenneth McKellar, Andy Stewart and the dancers of the White Heather Club put a generation off Scottish folklore for life.

So for me that still rules out anything with hogmanay in the title. In the end we plumped for *The End of the Year Show* with Angus Deayton. At least he is a completely reliable reader of scripted jokes, although he has developed a confused blink and a shy little smile when confronted with comics, like Paul Merton, who says things without using the autocue.

On Wednesday night he had Maureen Lipman, Jack Docherty, Dale Winton and Mark Lamarr to deal with and the red blink meter shot into the red zone. Maureen Lipman had already turned in a fine performance in BBC's *Cold Enough for Stone*, and the *Deayton* show she reminded us just how funny she is—a fast, sharp and capable of wiping the floor with most comics. Jack Docherty, on the other hand, was a man with a point to make. However lucrative, it must be frustrating starring on Britain's worst terrestrial channel, with an endless stream of D-list celebrities to interview. To add insult to injury he was recently pipped for a comedy award by his stand-in, the camp and squeaky Graham Norton.

So Docherty stilted away like the clappers, and poor Angus could hardly get a word in. The message seemed to be: "I could do this better than you." And he may have a point. The rest was jolly enough, including some neatly dubbed clips. I suspect the montage of Tony election losers over the credits was meant to be cruelly gloating. Actually it was rather poignant. It was Clive James who saved us from the whirling kilts, and this was a decent show in his mould.

As for Chris Evan's *TFI 1998*, he amused us with a series of women with breast implants and hilariously fashioned a model of his own genitals from small chipolatas. Friends tell me that Jools Holland on BBC2 was outstanding. Oh well, maybe next year.

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A rubbish tip on the roof of the world

Chris Bonington makes a plea for climbers to be cleaner

The peak, a brilliant gold, lit by the early morning sun, was reflected in the still, black waters of the lake. There was a small house nearby, flat-roofed, single storied with tiny windows. Yaks were grazing on the short grass.

It was August 1996 and we were on the shores of Samtso Taring, below Sepu Kunglha Karpu — "the white sky god" — one of Tibet's four most holy mountains. It was a scene of peace, of idyllic beauty. Man lived in perfect harmony with his environment in this place. And we were the first foreigners ever to stand on the shores of that lake.

Some 300 miles southwest, on the flanks of Everest, it was very different. Just a few weeks before there had been more than 300 climbers from some 25 different expeditions camped at its base camps. The route up the highest mountain on earth is waymarked by rubbish heaps. At around 8000 metres, the South Col has become the highest refuse tip in the world with corpses lying among empty oxygen bottles, used batteries, abandoned tents and discarded tins.

When, that year, a sudden spring storm hit, there had been some 40 climbers on the South Col. The majority were from commercial trips charging up to £42,000 a head.

The concept of guiding is as old as mountaineering itself. But in the late 19th century the more adventurous realised that in abrogating the leading and decision-making role, they were missing the principal challenge and satisfaction. Where Victorian pioneers had taken guides, by the end of the First World War almost all expeditions climbed without them.

In some ways the comparatively new phenomenon of the commercial expedition is a development of the guiding tradition. It is as if Everest and the other popular 8,000-metre peaks have become gigantic Mont Blancs or Matterhorns, where relative beginners have been hauled to the top by their guides for many years. The difference is one of degree, both in the price asked of the client and also in the security that a guide can offer. The client is undoubtedly mollycoddled. His oxygen bottles are carried, tents erected, meals cooked and the final summit ridge is fixed with ropes almost the whole way, although in the final push for the top the air is so thin, everyone is so close to their limit, that the guide can do little to ensure safety in the event of an emergency.

This was tragically demonstrated by the death of Rob Hall, the most successful of the Everest guides. He had with him a client, Doug Henson. Hall, like so many others that fatal day of May 9, pushed on towards the summit despite the storm clouds. He took a calculated risk and paid with

his life. Hall might have been able to get down by himself. But he stayed with his client, survived the night, but was too weak to move.

Eight died that day, a total of 12 that season on both sides of the mountain. Not all of them were members of guided parties.

I do not have a problem with the guided climbing on Everest. The real question arises from the number of expeditions being allowed at any one time. Traffic jams arise high on the slopes, with people queuing for an hour or more to get through bottlenecks, and occasionally in the process, condemning themselves to be overtaken by storm or nightfall. Sometimes people are left to die by parties hell-bent on reaching the summit at any cost.

In answer, some have proposed a ban on climbing Everest altogether. To me that is not the solution. It denies the highest point on earth to all and, on a practical level, affects the local economy. The answer should come from the climbers themselves. It is their actions on the mountain that affect each other, and it is only they who see the rubbish they leave.

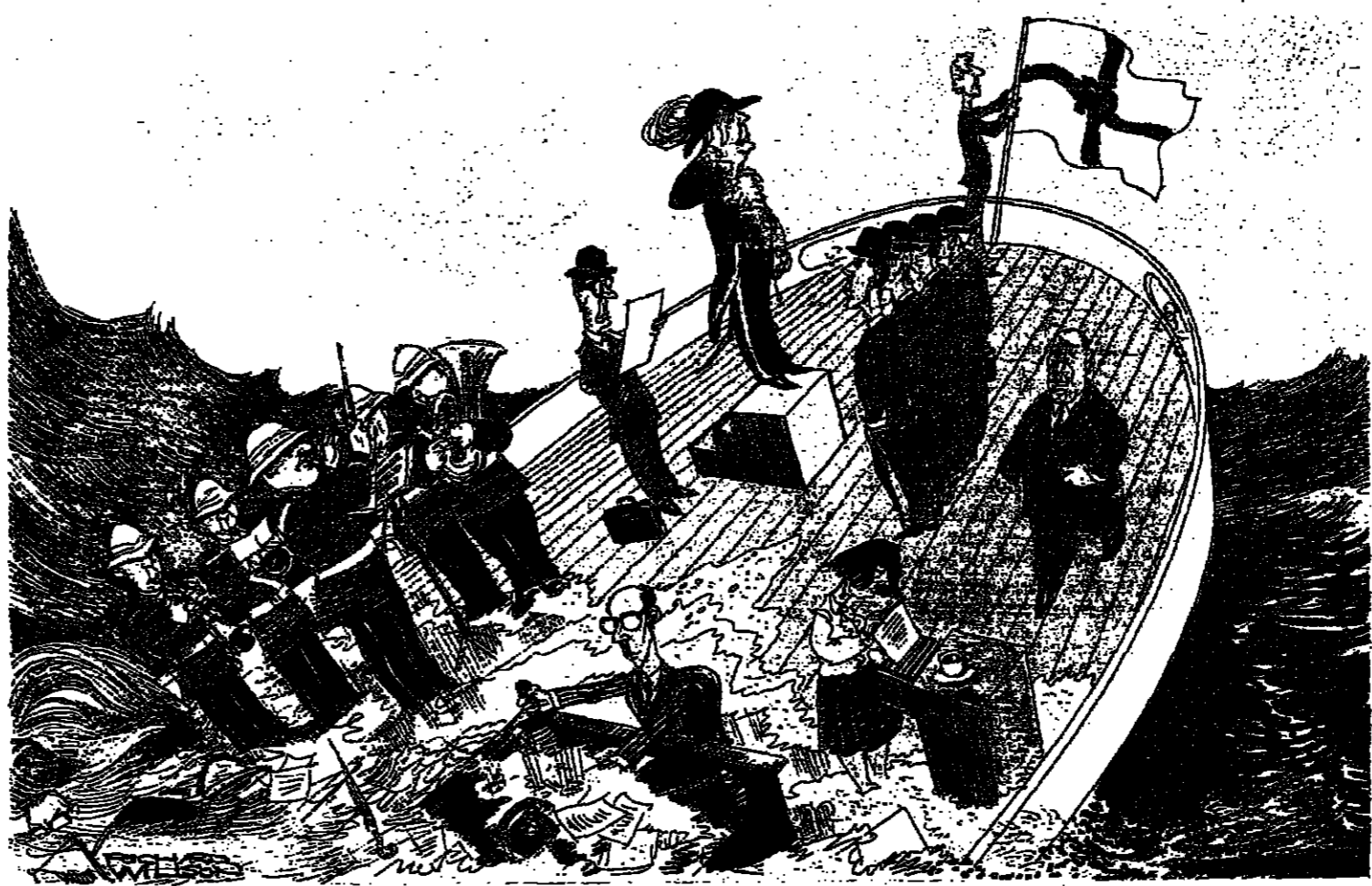
The Chinese and Nepalese Governments could, however, consider rationing the number of expeditions at any one time. This is something the Nepalese tried, but then relaxed their rules, perhaps influenced by the high fees they were collecting. Yet reducing the pressure of numbers would help climbers to treat both each other and the mountain with greater respect.

It is and always has been a small minority that want to break new ground and explore new places. Even in Nepal there are countless faces and ridges awaiting a first ascent. But most rare and precious of all are the mountain ranges still untouched. Sepu Kunglha Karpu is the highest peak of a range of mountains the size of Switzerland, not one of which has been climbed.

After our reconnaissance in 1996, we attempted the peak in the spring of last year but were defeated by bad weather. We will return next autumn. Hopefully we shall attain the summit but, equally importantly, we shall try to leave no signs of our presence on the mountain. We will climb as a closely knit team and will show respect for each other and for the few families who live on the shores of the sacred lake of Samtso Taring.

If all climbers could take this approach, the world's mountains would remain sacred places — not only for the adventurers whose dream and challenge it is to climb them, but for those who roam in imagination alone in these realms of untouched beauty.

Sir Christian Bonington led the first expedition up Everest's South West Face in 1975.



Our man in resignation

The triumph of formality over content, or why I departed the Foreign Office

A Valedictory Dispatch is the last formal reporting letter that a British Ambassador sends to the Foreign Secretary before retirement from the Diplomatic Service. Over the centuries this missive has become something of an institution: an opportunity to say the things one has always wanted to. Career is over. Discretion can be thrown to the winds. One can let rip.

Some do let rip. Others are gentle. A few are cursing, many mellowly appreciative and some very funny. A handful are sad. The bulk of their commentary is seldom their best. British diplomats writing classified letters can be scathing whenever they please about host countries, but a chance to cast a wry or bitter glance back over your employers: the Foreign Office. The dispatch is read, copied around, waved (sometimes) under the Foreign Secretary's nose, then filed away to gather dust.

This is a pity. British diplomats certainly know how to write. Thought, wisdom and not a few good jokes go into the drafting. If there were any mechanism by which these documents could be released early from their Official Secrets Act classification, an anthology of the best would make a marvellous bedside book for country houses.

I was a graduate recruit to the Foreign Office. My first job as "administrative trainee" was in what was called a "third room" in the Western European Department. Here we cast a preliminary eye over what came in from our embassies in the Scandinavian countries, before sending material upward as appropriate for more senior perusal. To the best of my recollection (it was about 25), it was I who "processed" the Valedictory letters from our Ambassadors in Reykjavik and Oslo. Two passages, one from each, I remember.

Our man in Oslo complained that in recent years he and his wife had been expected to live and entertain in a style for which the Office seemed increasingly unwilling to pay. A British minister had visited Oslo recently, he recalled, staying at the embassy. The politician had left his shoes outside his bedroom door to be cleaned; and at 5am they were duly removed and returned beautifully polished. What he would not have known was that the ambassador's wife had done the job.

Our man in Reykjavik hit harder.

He was retiring after Britain's foolish and failed confrontation with Iceland — the "Cod War". Apart from his routine duties, he reflected, he had during the course of his career offered Her Majesty's Government key advice at critical moments on the (re)ckoned about a dozen occasions. Sometimes it had been taken, sometimes not. He flattered himself, however, that in a better-than-average number of instances the advice had been right.

But he believed it would have affected his career not a jot. Not only did he doubt whether credit had ever been given, but he doubted whether any single human intelligence in the Service had even noticed, or cared.

That Valedictory struck a chord with me, already unhappy in a career from which I was to resign after only two years. There were all kinds of reasons why I was unsuited to the work, few of them of any general interest. I was shambolic in my work-methods. You need to be clever there, but you also need to be clever in the right way.

At the heart of the job is the conveyance and presentation of information. To do this as required you need style, confidence, thoroughness and a huge sense of hierarchy. This sense of hierarchy — of organisation — pervades everything. Advice must be presented and arguments put, by the right people to the right people, in the right order, in the right language, after consultation with those who should be consulted and avoiding consultation with those who should not. Who needs to know? Who needs not to know? To whom must documents be copied and from whom are comments required?

For someone like me, far too interested (for a junior) in the content of decisions as opposed to the manner in which they were taken — stupidly opinionated and unaware when I was out of my depth — this obsession (as it seemed to me) with methodology, this habitual subordination of content to style, was a sort of nightmare; and I floundered. They thought I was sloppy. I thought they

were slick. They thought I was erratic. I thought they were hide-bound. Perhaps we both had a point.

I must not represent myself as a brilliant young man who was just too disorganised to make an impact. The FCO took 12 graduate trainees in my year and most of them were cleverer than me. Of those who stayed, however, the most successful today will be bright — very — but they will also love and drive the Service as one loves and drives a classic car, with as much energy going into the polish, the tuning and the smooth gear-changes as into any consideration of where one might drive it, to or why.

No department of state more effectively or completely captures its servants. How far we can sustain Baronesse Thatcher's charge that it captures its ministers, too, is a most important question.

Michael Cockerell's *How to be a Foreign Secretary*, on BBC2 at 7.10pm this Sunday, helps only a little with the answer. But the programme tells us much — and most of it unwittingly. For, whether or not the FCO captures its ministers, it does seem to have captured a BBC documentary.

See this programme, if you get the chance, as an analogy for the Diplomatic Service itself. For a start the production is like the FCO, fascinating throughout. To record interviews with Foreign Secretaries — from James Callaghan to Robin Cook, is a major achievement. Each of them sparkles and engages. Secondly, it is classy. Nobody does these things better than the British: the discreet editing, the seamless cuts, the fine drafting and impeccable voiceovers. The settings — the old India Office, the Durbur Court in Whitehall, the royal tour of India — make perfect backdrops.

And the programme is intelligent. Some complex and agonising dilemmas faced by Foreign Secretaries are explained and illustrated. We weigh the arguments for and against apologising to Saudi Arabia for TV's *Death of a Princess*; we hear the case (David Owen dissenting) for spying

on our European partners; and Lord Callaghan of Cardiff tells us about his decision to kowtow to Idi Amin in order to save the life of a British prisoner.

So you follow the thing through, impressed from start to finish. And you end up... curiously dissatisfied. What did the documentary (what does the Foreign Office) actually do? What have we learnt?

We have learnt that ministers work hard, sleep little and travel thousands of miles; and that the Office lays siege to them with reams of documents. Yes, but top businessmen work hard too. Show me the Foreign Office's balance sheet. Callaghan, Owen, Carrington, Howe, Hurd, Rifkind, Cook... all were impressive; but who was right? Who got it wrong? Why? Was it their fault or that of their civil servants?

We learn from the documentary that formal meetings of large numbers of European ministers are a dreadful bore and a waste of time. But how hard is the FCO trying to scrap these formalities? We see acres of cut glass, polished table and silverware; much exquisite food eaten, much fine wine drunk. We are told Britain does this in style. But does it really make a difference? When? Why? Give me instances.

Even at moments when my short Foreign Office career did not seem hopeless, I was haunted by two questions. First, if a policy were doomed or crazy, was the FCO a good machine for recognising this and blowing the whistle? They might just sail on, polishing the brass. The common fisheries policy was being negotiated when I was there. Secondly, I doubted whether, should the machine produce a whistle-blower, the Office was designed to encourage him. I could not forget that Valedictory from our man in Reykjavik. I enjoy classy documentaries from the BBC, but am I edified? If you want edification, why not try a low-budget, dumsily edited series on why Robin Cook gets a country house provided from public funds but cannot have a biscuit with his coffee? Tell me not about the plainly lunatic outcome, but about the institutional path by which it was reached. You might then tell me something new about the culture of our Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Simon Jenkins is away.

Philip Howard



Ta-ta then Blackpool, adios Benidorm. 'Ere we go to Val-d'Isère

Skiing is easy. Whoosh! Splat! And then stagger a mile in footwear as uncomfortable as the iron gumbots of Lancelot. If you are quick, you can learn to ski in ten sittings. Myself, I shall never win the slalom unless I learn how to turn. But I should win the men's downhill by a head.

Today, the first changeover Saturday of 1998, is the busiest day of the year. Airports such as Lyons, Zurich and Milan are congested with queues of package tourists landing every ten minutes with their unwieldy luggage and children. For skiing is becoming a People's Sport, and its resorts are what the Costa Brava was 30 years ago and Blackpool 80 years ago. Arnold Bennett wrote then: "Blackpool is an ugly town, mean in its vastness, but its dancing-halls present a beautiful spectacle." Human creatures endured hard and repulsive work all year for this week. "And here they are in splendour! They will work hard at joy until they drop from exhaustion."

In 1998 the sociologist can observe Bennett's same mass frenzy in the discos up the Alps, throbbing through the night to deafening rock and mesmeric strobes. For sliding on snow is what economists label a positional (or hierarchical) good. Like motoring. In the Thirties, with Dornford Yates or Mr Toad at the wheel of the Hispano-Suiza, motoring down the open road was a glamorous activity for the privileged few. Now that most people drive or are driven in a car, motoring has become tailbacks, screaming children, cones and road rage.

The same phenomenon can be seen today on the piste. A century ago the Englishmen Henry and Arnold Lunn pioneered skiing holidays with the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club. Many were cold but few were frozen. Today skiing has become a winter break for the workers. The accents on the charter flights are not obviously public-school. Pizza parlours and lager are replacing raclette and the local wines, and Lowry might have painted the snow black with matchstick skiers breaking each other's knees (the boots have made ankles unbreakable). The ski-lifts keep running through conditions that would stop the Circle Line for a year for time-off owing. Where on the London Underground would a porter run across the lines to help to carry a baby?

Twenty-five centuries ago Herodotus wrote the first surviving ski report. The dwellers beyond the north wind, i.e. somewhere up the M6. The Hyperborean Abaris travelled the world on his "arrow", clearly hired skiing. Skiing is still partly paying £2,000 worth of ski clothes and equipment (try Oxfam) and travelling 1,000 miles through snow in a coach to stand around in a disco getting drunk. But it is also flying in sunshine. And that it has now become widely available is not just a positional good, but a good plain and simple.

Big hitter

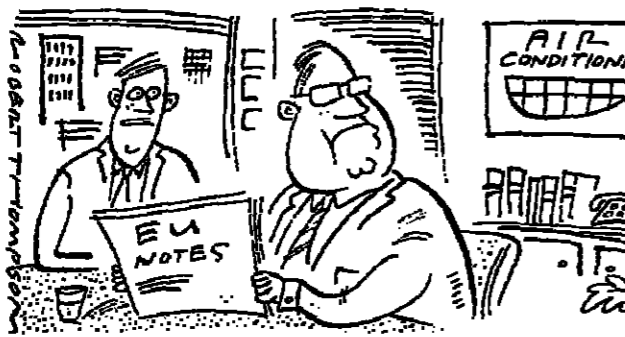
JOHN MAJOR may have lost a premiership but he has finally found a role: he has accepted a senior post at the Brian Johnston Memorial Trust but turned down, I can disclose, offers of 15 directorships. The trust, honouring the late cricket commentator, encourages youngsters and the disabled to play the elegant game. Major, a cricket fanatic who — as I noted recently — is off to the West Indies for the winter series, has accepted the role of vice-patron. He will be joined by such cricketing masters as Richie Benaud and David Gower. Chief patron will be J. Paul Getty Jr, for whom Johnners used to organise the new knight's marvellous cricket festival.

This will revive an old political alliance, as Major's old lieutenant Iain Sproat, the first Sports Minister to take on the educational establishment, is already a trustee. In his new role Major will have to break with his attachment to the Oval, where he relaxed after the strains of last May by cheering on his beloved Surrey, to attend regular meetings at Lord's. The high-



John Major: Brian Johnston

light will be a dinner in April at the ground — a Bothamesque slog from his St John's Wood home — to be attended by many of the game's greats. Much more fun than idling in the boardroom of a merchant bank: just not as lucrative.



What makes you think Tony Blair is spying on us. Helmut?

• *"DUE to unforeseen circumstances, Noel's House Party for Saturday, January 3 on BBC1 will now be replaced," reads the missive from Television Centre. Why has the notion been spared? "Noel isn't ill. It just couldn't go ahead," offers a gormless BBC flunkey. Anything to do with reports that Edmonds unwittingly sprayed the audience with water from a pipe containing traces of the bacteria which can cause legionnaires' disease, as revealed last year? "Mr Edmonds has nothing to add. We are giving viewers another chance to enjoy The Best of Noel's House Party." The television receiver at Diary Towers will not be primed for the broadcast.*

Fast forward
THE literary career of Richard Noble, whose team broke the sound barrier, has stalled. His book *Thrust: The Story of Speed* was to have been published in April. But Macmillan has now cancelled, even though bookshops have made orders, after learning that another publishing house, Transworld, was also claiming to have signed Noble.

OLD TIMES
"THE countryside will be better off without him," John Prescott on Lord Shuttleworth, former chairman of the Rural Development Commission. Now David Clark, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, has appointed him to the Duchy's council for his "fine attributes".



JASPER GERARD
The two projects sounded oddly similar, claiming the same ghost-writer. Now Macmillan has sent a stiff letter to Noble and his helpers. "We have spent money and expect damages at least," ventures Clare Alexander, editor-in-chief at Macmillan, who says she made a "verbal agreement" with Noble at last year's Frankfurt Book Fair. Noble, though, is a man with many offers.

• **TONY BLAIR'S** Seychelles trip has left David Frost grumpy. "It has been a tradition that David interviews the PM on the first Sunday of the new year," says a source. How fortunate that Robin Cook was prepared to fill in for the PM.

Sounds fishy
"JIMMY BELL is living the simple life of a fisherman on the Florida coast. Then, a mysterious call gives Jimmy the chance of a lifetime — to go to New York, make it as an artist and be richer than he ever dreamt possible. It's a long shot. But Jim-

my might get everything he ever wanted — including the girl of his dreams. Until he uncovers a shocking truth that threatens to shatter his world..." And what cliché-ridden nonsense do you suppose this blurb is promoting? Yes, *Great Expectations* by one Charles Dickens, for the "novelisation" of the movie.

• **Among those to descend on Cape Town for the holiday season is Chris Eubank, who has flown out his barber from the UK to make sure he can compete with Earl Spencer — recently voted South Africa's second most eligible bachelor behind Nelson Mandela, 79.**

Scopped
AS the fuss escalates over the forced disclosure that Jack Straw is the Cabinet minister whose son has been accused of peddling drugs, credit for breaking the story belongs to... *The North Adams Transcript* in Northern Massachusetts (readership 13,000). I just hope this cheers up Mr Stuart Higgins, Editor of *The Sun*, whose attempt to name the minister had been blocked by the Attorney-General.

NEW TIMES
A PROPELLER three metres wide with five blades and weighing 4,800kg, late of the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, is to be sold off. The vendors suggest the regal relic "would provide a focal point for a major property development." Don't tell Her Majesty.



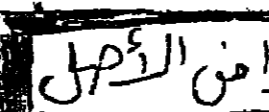
Cheryl partied in Surrey. Christine ate humble sandwiches



Cheryl partied in Surrey. Christine ate humble sandwiches

PARTY TIMES
SOBER is the new year. Grim celebrations were endured by Neil and Christine Hamilton. "We lost our electricity in the gales," grumbles Neil from darkened Cheshire. "We've been eating ham sandwiches by candlelight for the past week." The scandal-ridden former MP promises that 1998 will be a year of self-assessment: "I'm doing my tax returns with Christine." His conqueror, Martin Bell, is less troubled: "I was in Hanipstead. There was a priest from Ipswich staying in my Tatton home." The Tory MP Cheryl Gillan was celebrating the tri-

umph of feminism at the RAC Country Club dinner dance in Surrey. "They have just voted to let women in, so next year I won't be a guest of my husband," she thunders. Hipper revellers crowded under a giant tent on Clapham Common to celebrate the launch of *Starship Troopers*, a silly saga about a planet threatened by power-crazed insects. Peter Mandelson's and William Hague's private offices unsuccessfully sought entry. Disney will be glad to learn that instead, dopey organisers rolled out the red carpet for an aspiring *Home and Away* actress and a former *Blue Peter* presenter.





STRAWS IN THE WIND

Anonymity is blown away at last

Sometimes, like a breaker at flood tide, the law is overwhelmed by events. So it was yesterday, when a High Court judge, Mr Justice Toulson, sensibly lifted the injunction against naming Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, whose son had been accused of supplying cannabis to a *Mirror* reporter. The minister had already been identified in Scotland, in Ireland, on the Internet and in foreign papers on news-stands in England. A hole had been driven through the legal barriers and the waters could no longer be held back.

It was a relief too for Mr Straw. He himself had said that he wished to speak publicly about his predicament from the start. Anonymity was never going to protect him or his son, William, for ever. The longer the mystery lasted, the longer the Home Secretary was free to explain how he felt about what had happened and to acknowledge the problems that all parents face as their children grow up.

The whole affair is clearly embarrassing for Mr Straw who, as a minister, has taken a particularly tough line against drugs and has argued that parents should take greater responsibility for their children. Yet he seems to have acted as responsibly as any parent could have done under the circumstances: as soon as he was informed of the allegation, he took his son to the police station and offered to make a statement. Mr Straw is known to be a conscientious parent, even continuing to chair the board of governors of his son's school after he became Home Secretary.

There should be no question of resignation. No parent can wholly control the actions of a 17-year-old. It would be unfair, in this case, for the sins of the son to be visited upon the father. If anything, Mr Straw may be able to do his job better now. His

understanding of the problems of drugs, teenagers, parenting and youth justice will have been enhanced by his recent experience. And he has conducted himself with dignity and openness under pressure. Few who watched his performances on television yesterday could have failed to feel sympathy for his plight.

What about William himself? It should be remembered that the law was intended to protect not the minister, but his son, who is still legally a minor. It is not William's fault that his father is in the Cabinet. Had he been any other 17-year-old, no reporter would have bothered to pursue the story and little subsequent interest would have been shown in his case.

The fact that he is 17, able to marry, drive a car and join the Army, has led many to judge that he is old enough to cope with the publicity. That may be so; indeed in Scotland, 16 is the age limit for anonymity. But that does not mean that the whole notion of shielding children, even of famous parents, from publicity is wrong. Had William been only ten, publication of his name could have been immensely harmful.

The law was framed to protect people from having the mistakes of their childhood cast a shadow over the rest of their life, not to gag the press. There will always be sensitive cases in which a small number of people know the facts and others do not, and the justification for such secrecy is the protection of a child.

In this case, William Straw will still have to accept a level of publicity quite disproportionate to the offence that he is said to have committed. For a boy coming up to his A levels, the intrusion on his life may prove damagingly disruptive. Yesterday his father made a frank statement. Now William should be left alone. He has already paid a heavy price.

A TWITCH IN TIME

Rare birds are commoner but common birds are rarer

The bird of the year in 1948 was the little ringed plover. These tiny waders, once rare in Britain, had just arrived and started breeding on the shores of gravel pits and sewage farms, the birdwatchers went on *en masse* in search of them. The event caused such excitement that the television presenter Kenneth Allsop even wrote a book about it, called *Adventure Lit Their Star*. Since 1948 leisure time has expanded and nature's reach in these islands contracted but birdwatching has weathered the changes as well as any migrant species to emerge as a hobby where the amateur has had to adapt to assert a new expertise.

The immediate postwar years were the heyday of the amateur ornithologist in this country. A whole generation of enthusiasts were out in the field. They were not only interested in dramatic events like the arrival of the plovers, but also in the everyday life of the common birds, and the magazine *British Birds* was packed with their observations.

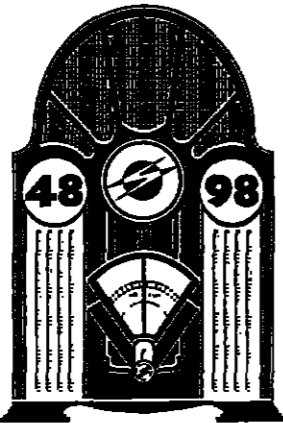
Things have changed greatly since then. In 1948, bird behaviour was scarcely recognised as a fit object of study by university departments of zoology. Now there are hundreds of academic ornithologists, many of them changing the way we see our feathered friends. The success of the professional students of bird behaviour has turned the amateurs' attention elsewhere: the "twitchers" who have acquired their name because they tremble at the thought of seeing a new, rare species for their list: their hero is the man

who abandoned his bride on his wedding day for the chance of another "twitch".

As for the birds themselves, it could be said that rare birds have become commoner and common birds rarer. The twitchers have discovered that many vagrant species from America or Siberia turn up far more regularly on our coasts than was known before. Also, in addition to the little ringed plover, we have been invaded by collared doves from the Balkans, who were completely unknown here before the war, while rose-ringed parakeets nest in our parks and little egrets have arrived in the last two years to breed in Poole Harbour.

Farming practices, on the other hand, have hit the common birds hard. The worst chemical pesticides are now banned, and the population of small, insect-eating birds — and of sparrowhawks, which ate the birds which ate the poisoned insects — has largely recovered. It is our finches and other seed-eating birds who are in trouble now, with not an ear of corn left on the stubble-fields, and herbicides destroying the weed-seeds they need at the field edges.

We are still a nation of bird-lovers. Membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds reached the figure of a million this year. Even that success does not guarantee that our bird species will all survive. The house-building programme in the countryside is another threat. Yet, the British people are clearly as entranced by birds as ever — by their beauty, their grace on the wing, and their serene independence of man.



OF MICE AND MANDELSON

The minister enters the magic kingdom

Walt Disney must be the only organisation with more experience of manipulating images than the Labour Party. So when Mandy meets Mickey, the Minister without Portfolio will be not only paying homage to the world's consummate entertainer but learning the secrets of a multibillion-dollar organisation that has done more even than Peter Mandelson to make millions believe that fantasy is truth.

Inevitably, each will seek to turn the surreal encounter to his advantage. Mickey will want to stroll arm-in-arm with the British minister down Main Street. Disney World, as an assortment of gigantic furry cats, dogs, ducks, elephants, dwarfs and elves frolic and tootle alongside. Mandy will want to parade the details of crowd control, garbage collection, mass catering and transport to sceptics questioning the Government's ability both to fill the Millennium Dome with wondrous things and to ensure that the crowds do not become ensnared in a logistical maze.

Mr Mandelson's chief interest will be the Epcot centre, the futuristic science and technology park that is almost as popular as the nearby slides and rides of Disney World. Offering visitors a tour through time and space, Epcot is an acronym that Mr Mandelson would probably like to appropriate for the Labour Party — Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. It begins, like the party, in the age of the dinosaurs; it ends with *Spaceship Earth*, a 180 ft-high geosphere presenting man's achievements, past and future. Epcot is full of themes and

pavilions that could have been created by the Prince of Imagists himself: *Future World*, displaying the latest in science; *World Showcase*, celebrating the sights and cuisine of 11 nations; the *Universe of Energy*, the *Wonders of Life* and the *Living Seas*.

Mr Mandelson would do well to jot down a few notes on how to draw gasps of awe from future visitors to Greenwich, and how to make Time, the Millennium Dome theme, a crowd-pulling concept. But Disney is a notoriously astute management organisation that takes a dim and litigious view of imitators and maintains a discipline and secrecy about its workings even more rigid than the Labour Whips' Office. Visitors to Orlando see, every day, a pristine, cheerful landscape with no trace of the wear and tear or mountains of litter left the day before. What they do not see is the underground city where miles of passages bring food, fuel, supplies and spares to the restaurants, shops and attractions. They do not see the extraordinary organisational hierarchy that has made Disney a byword in the world of management for rigid — if intolerant — efficiency, all-pervasive control, and corporate morale daily boosted by the competitive statistics of success.

If it all seems familiar to Mr Mandelson, he may still find inspiration in the empire of enjoyment created from mere celluloid images on a screen. And if the dome brings even a tenth of the income and visitors to *Greenwich* that *Disney* brings to Florida, then no one will be able to accuse Mr Mandelson of taking the Mickey.

Why Government should think again on benefit cuts

From the Chief Executives of Mencap and of Scope

Sir, For over six million disabled people in the UK, 1998 will begin with fear and trepidation — not knowing whether their disability benefits will survive. Instead of the emotion and speculation of the last month, with broad questioning and much broad answering, we now need specifics to be addressed.

Our experience and expertise with disabled people means that we know the message "off benefits, into work" is an oversimplification. Disabled people who can only achieve very low earnings will need benefits as well as their earnings.

The Prime Minister must also accept that the extra cost of disability exists in work and out of work and that the disability living allowance encourages disabled people to work when they can. If this is withdrawn, taxed or means-tested, does the Government accept it would discourage disabled people from working?

The most that anyone can get from incapacity benefit (earned by contributions) is £75.60 a week and the most anyone can get from severe disablement allowance (for those who have never been able to work and pay contributions) is £50.90 a week. Does the Prime Minister propose to reduce these benefits to "encourage" sick and disabled people to work?

We all recognise the need for a review of the means by which those disabled people who can work are supported into work. However, we deplore the muddled thinking which suggests that helping a minority into work requires further reductions in incapacity benefits. This can only

be the work of a Government which, in all reality, proposes less adequate recognition of disability or understanding of disability costs.

Yours faithfully,
FRED HEDDELL (Mencap),
RICHARD BREWSTER (Scope),
Mencap National Centre,
123 Golden Lane, EC1Y 0RT,
January 2.

From Mrs Margaret Marshall

Sir, Over a third of our children are classed by Save the Children as living in poverty. "New" Labour is increasing that poverty by cutting lone-parent benefits. Mothers of pre-school children should not be forced to take employment outside the home. There are not enough jobs available for all who want them and many jobs on offer are low-paid.

Children should not suffer deprivation because of the status of their parents. Efforts must now be made to make the Child Support Agency act more efficiently but fairly. Both parents should take responsibility for the welfare and wellbeing of their children.

A promise kept?

From Mr J. Nicholas

Sir, Before the election New Labour promised that it would not be a party of "tax and spend". It has kept that promise: clearly it is a party of "tax and don't spend".

Yours faithfully,
JOHN NICHOLAS,
23 Lower Street, Rode, Bath BA3 6PU,
December 31.

Westminster ruling

From Ms Philippa Dolan

Sir, As the solicitor for former Westminster councillor Peter Hartley (report, December 20) and unlike Mr Macdonald-Brown (letter, December 26), I am jolly relieved that the auditor did not obtain freezing orders over the assets of those he decided to surcharge under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act.

Of the six people surcharged by the auditor in the "homes for votes" case four have had their appeals allowed. Of the ten originally named, the court found the allegations proved against only two — Dame Shirley Porter and Councillor David Weeks.

Both the procedure under the Act and the auditor were criticised in the High Court judgment. How much greater the miscarriage of justice if the assets of the innocent had been frozen for years on the say-so of an accountant.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIPPA DOLAN,
Rochman Landau
(Solicitors and Privy Council agents),
45 Mortimer Street, WIN 7TD,
December 29.

Defence of Europe

From Sir Clive Rose

Sir, Your list of 1998 anniversaries (December 30) omits one event of which the effects were of outstanding importance. The conclusion of the Brussels Treaty for mutual defence between Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom on March 17, 1948, provided the essential evidence of European self-help needed by the advocates in the United States of close defence association with Europe.

It ensured the passage by the United States Senate on June 11, 1948, of the "Vandenberg Resolution" which authorised the President to join with the European governments in negotiations leading to the conclusion (in March 1949) of the North Atlantic Treaty.

The United States commitment, through Nato, to the defence of Europe in peacetime represented an historic break with traditional American foreign policy. Fifty years of familiarity should not obscure the crucial influence the Brussels Treaty had in securing that commitment.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE ROSE
(UK Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council, 1979-82),
Chinney House, Lavenham,
Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9QT,
January 2.

Caribbean anniversary

From Mr Arthur Torrington

Sir, May 1 add an important date to your "Anniversaries of 1998" that is of great interest in ethnic minorities in Britain?

On June 22, 1948, 500 settlers from the Caribbean arrived at Tilbury Docks, Essex, having travelled on the *SS Empire Windrush*. That was the first wave of postwar immigration to the UK. In the 50th anniversary year people of Caribbean background will be celebrating their contribution to the wellbeing of modern Britain. The celebrations will include concerts, festivals, features on radio and television, exhibitions, and many other activities.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR TORRINGTON
(Secretary, Windrush Foundation),
27 Elm Grove,
Orpington, Kent BR6 0AA,
arthur.torrington@compuserve.com
December 30.

Gaelic links

From Mr Timothy Concannon

Sir, Whilst Mr Geoffrey H. Lloyd (letter, December 30) is at liberty to question the value of this Government promoting the Gaelic traditions of Scotland and Ireland with public money, I do take issue with him when he refers to "an obvious minority group".

The current gene map of Western Europe shows that in a vast swath of territory (including the majority of mainland England and western France) the inhabitants are genetically identical with the so-called "Celtic fringes" of Ireland, Scotland and Wales: a distribution which (arguably) accords with the Gaelic of the Middle Bronze Age.

Against that background, the Celtic spoken in Scotland and Ireland may be of greater cultural significance to

the majority population of Britain than Latin, or even English itself, particularly as the oldest literature in Western Europe is Gaelic.

Since the governments of former days spent taxpayers' money to suppress the use of this language, is it not only just that young Gaels (wherever they happen to live) should now be helped by the same taxpayers to read about the "historic" Connaught Beccleuch ("Conan the Fearless") in the original, rather than watch his Hollywood avatar, Conan the Barbarian, in English?

If Wales can produce "Superted" in Cymraeg, why should we not have the Gaulish Ogma instead of Hercules?

Yours sincerely,
TIMOTHY CONCANNON
(*Tudg Ua Conchennáin*),
29 North Lane, Buriton,
Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 5RS,
December 31.

Protecting Nessie

From Lord Hardy of Wath

Sir, It was interesting to read that the Loch Ness Monster was protected by the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act, 1975 (report and leading article, January 1). This measure was the enactment of my Private Member's Bill that year.

However, Nessie was not quite so shielded as you report. It could have been since the Act provided protection for any species if the Secretary of State, on the advice of the Nature Conservation Council, secured parliamentary approval of an appropriate order. I do not think this step was ever taken.

Had it been, I am sure that Parliament — and the press — would have approved — and enjoyed the debate which might have taken place.

Still, if the mere existence of the Act saved Nessie — if there is one — from oriental tranquilliser darts and the removal of its skin for sampling then I am most gratified by that unlooked-for benefit of the measure.

Should Nessie decide to surface, presumably both the Secretary of State or the new Scottish assembly will wish to approve protection.

Yours etc,
PETER HARDY,
House of Lords,
January 1.

On a rising note

From Ms Patti Steele

Sir, Raising the pitch or placing a questioning intonation at the end of statements of fact (letter, December 26) is simply the current popular form and a most efficient method in discourse in terms of engaging the interlocutor. The rise is generally equivalent to "are you with me?"

Efficiency, namely how to be understood with the least effort, is at a premium in all communication. The tendency may be irritating, but it is common to several dialects of English and studies show that for thirty years it has made great advances in Australian English.

Millions of UK residents have spoken Australian as daily fare, via popular television programmes — you know?

Yours faithfully,
PATTI STEELE,
Salita dei Parioli 40,
00198 Rome,
r.steele@agora.stm.it
January 2.

Dome spectacular

From Professor D. Robertson Smith

Sir, Mr Robin Dyke (letter, December 31) quite correctly suggests the millennium logo should have been MM. I am surprised it was not PM (guess who).

Yours faithfully,
D. ROBERTSON SMITH,
1 Bishop's Wood,
Cuddesdon, Oxford OX44 9HA,
December 31.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046, e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Remembrance of Christ's sacrifice

From the Reverend Dr Alan C. Clifford

Sir, As a theologian in the "Reformed Catholic" rather than the "Roman" or "Anglo-Catholic" traditions, I find grave difficulties with the liberalism of Bishop John Hind and Mr Leonard Scott (letters, December 27). Are we to imagine from Matthew xxvi, 27 and Luke xli, 17 that Our Lord literally urged the Disciples to drink the cup itself rather than share its contents? Furthermore, when Christ said "I am the door" (John x, 9) and "I am the vine" (John xv, 5), was he not obviously speaking as symbolically as when he said of the bread and wine "This is my body... This is my blood"?

The sacramentalism of your correspondents only dates officially from the fourth Lateran Council of 1215, being derived from the novel transubstantiation theory of the 9th-century Paschasius Radbertus.

At the Reformation, the Reformed Churches (including the semi-reformed Church of England) reverted to the purer biblical symbolism and spirituality of earlier times.

Accordingly, we — with the exception of the now ecumenical Anglicans — believe that Christ's sacrifice is remembered, not repeated, on a table, not an altar; his real presence is spiritual, not physical, in the hearts of his people and not in the bread and wine.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN C. CLIFFORD
(Pastor, Norwich Reformed Church),
7 Woodside Park,
Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2JL,
cliffordnrc@compuserve.com
December 27.

From the Reverend Alastair Thom

Sir, I should have thought that the words "This is my body... This is my blood", uttered by Jesus at the Last Supper, were plainly symbolic. To characterise such a view of the Eucharist as "mere" symbolism (report, December 23) is to be ungenerous to the power and depth of these symbols.

To some who see the Royal Standard flying from a building, it is merely a flag. To those who know, it conveys the presence within of the monarch. In the same way, to those without faith the bread and wine remain mere symbols, but to those with faith they convey, in the words of Thomas Cranmer, the "true and spiritual presence of Christ".

Yours faithfully,
ALASTAIR THOM,
Church House, Howes Close,
Mountfield Road, N3 3NX,
December 27.

From Mr Gerry Hanson

Sir, Bishop Hind tells us that "it is important not to oversimplify the Sacraments", but surely it is because we have over-complicated the Eucharist that our present problems obtain. Starting the Passover meal with the centuries-old practice of breaking of bread, Christ's instruction was both simple and clear: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke xxi, 19). No mention of a priest to do it for us. Indeed, the reintroduction of the Old Testament office of the priesthood, and its involvement in the Eucharist, was a man-made addition to Christian worship centuries after Christ.

If we were to revert to the simple interpretation of the Last Supper and follow Christ's instruction, we could avoid all the divisive theological argument that stands in the way of the Peace which He came to bring.

I am, Sir, yours truly,
GERRY HANSON,
Potters Lodge, 74a Slough Road,
Iver Heath SL0 0DY,
December 27.

Stitches in time

From Mr R. G. Maling

Sir, While Mr David Shamash (letter, December 31) was no doubt using the spare minutes in waiting for midnight on Wednesday by writing 98 into the date space on the next dozen cheques in his chequebook, I was doing the same for my paying-in book.

As an optimist for 1998 it gives me great pleasure to think of Mr Shamash anticipating debit while I contemplate credit.

Yours faithfully,
R. G. MALING,
Windfall, 11 Chalkshire Road,
Butlers Cross, Aylesbury HP17 0TS,
January 2.

In search of Mr W. H.

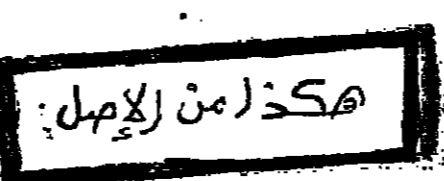
From Mr Graham J. A. Clark

Sir, Dr John Rollett's convoluted system for teasing out "Henry Wriothesley", the "onlie begotter", from the dedication to Shakespeare's sonnets (report, December 31) is fascinating; but it may not find universal acceptance.

Without using his technique of picking a fragment of a word here and another there, the names to be found in his two rectangles also include Dave, Rene, Noel, Ena, Shane, Lew, Hiram, Les, Eva, Lin, Leo, Toni, Sean, and the lovable Pook.

However, if we adopt Dr Rollett's technique it is plain for all to see that the sonnets were in fact prophetically dedicated to Elvis Presley.

Yours faithfully,
GRAHAM J. A. CLARK,
Holt Lodge, Vines Lane,
Hildenborough, Kent TN11 9LT,
December 31.



SOCIAL NEWS

The Queen, as Honorary Air Commodore, will visit RAF Marham, King's Lynn, Norfolk, on February 2 and not February 19.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh will visit Clyde on March 6.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY
Brigadier Sir John Anstey, former president, National Savings Committee, 91; Mr David Abernethy, conductor, 54; Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, 90; Mr John Bamford, former Principal, Lincro College, Oxford, 77; Mr Michael Barratt, broadcaster, 70; Sir Victor Borge, comedian, 89; Mr Keith Brookman, trade unionist, 61; Sir Robin Butler (late peer), former Cabinet Secretary, 60; Sir Bryan Carsberg, former Director-General, Office of Fair Trading, Mr Fran Cotton, former rugby player, 50.

Latest wills

Mary Elizabeth Layton, of Bielby, York, left estate valued at £1,355,024 net. She left £20,000 each to RNIB, St Leonard's Hospice, York, British Deaf Association, Cancer Research Campaign and the RSPCA, plus shares in her estate to SCOPE, the Trust for the Training of Handicapped Children in Arts and Crafts, Walsley, Cheshire, RNIB and the British Deaf Association.



Toby Harrison-Banfield and Caireen Young, of Oxford, announced their engagement

Forthcoming marriages

Dr D.C. Adamson and Dr M.J. Brochwicz-Lewinski
The engagement is announced between David Craig, son of Mrs Sheila Adamson, of Tynemouth, and Mrs R.W. O'Donoghue, of Woking, Surrey, and Claire, daughter of Mr and Mrs Stephen Wingfield Digby, of Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire.

Anniversaries

TODAY
BIRTHS: Thomas Tullius Ciern, Roman orator and statesman, Atinum, Latium, 100BC; Pietro Antonio Metastasio, poet, Rome, 1698; Sir James Stephen, colonial administrator and historian, Lambeth, 1784; Robert Whitehead, inventor, Bolton-le-Moors, Lancashire, 1823; Clement Attlee, 1st Earl Attlee, Prime Minister 1945-51, London, 1883; Herbert Morrison, Baron Morrison of Lambeth, statesman, London, 1888; James Earle Ray, assassin of Dr Martin Luther King, 1928; J.R.R. Tolkien, scholar and writer, Bloomsbury, London, 1892.

Church news

Appointments
The Rev David Senior, Priest-in-Charge, Hall Green (Birmingham); to be also Priest-in-Charge, Chappell Lane St Michael (same diocese).

KID GALAHAD

Perched alone on a sofa, Robert Redford looks curiously vulnerable. The charm, the blue eyes and the golden hair are there all right. The skin is now heavily weathered, betraying his 53 years and outdoor life, and the famed looks are more chiselled. But this graceful, slight-framed man is milder and more diffident than the image.

ON THIS DAY

January 3, 1991

In a rare interview, Robert Redford met Charles Brenner in a New York hotel room on the eve of a new release, Havana, to speak about his private self and the ideals that motivate him.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS

BATTE - On Boxing Day, 23rd December, a son, Patrick Paul, to Jacky and Paul, of 10, Westwood, London. A brother for Polly and Ben.

DEATHS

AGNEW - Isabel Marguerite, nee Fenton, 87, died peacefully at home, aged 87, on December 27th, 1997. Formerly of Quainton, Bucks. She was the late Garry, deeply loved mother of David and Susan, and grandmother of David and Susan.

MARRIAGES

KENNEDY-VANBERGEN - A service of Prayer and Dedication for the Marriage of Ian Kennedy and Susan Vanbergen (nee Goss) will take place at St. Andrew's, London, on January 10th.

ANNIVERSARIES

BALAHAN - Dudley Claude, died peacefully at home on December 27th, 1997. He was the late Mrs. E.H. Balahan, nee Jones, and was the father of Mrs. E.H. Balahan, nee Jones, and was the father of Mrs. E.H. Balahan, nee Jones.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

GRAHAM-WRIGHT - On 3rd January 1948, at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, William Graham and Kathleen Wright, 50th Anniversary of their marriage. Present address: 2 Hillbury Court, Hillbury Road, Essex, SS16 9QA.

DEATHS

BAVIER - Martha died Monday, 27th December, 27th January 1997. She was the late Mrs. M. Bavier, nee Jones, and was the mother of Mrs. M. Bavier, nee Jones.

DEATHS

COOPER - On 28th December, 1997, at the Royal Victoria Hospital, a son, Thomas, to Mrs. J. Cooper, nee Jones, and was the father of Mrs. J. Cooper, nee Jones.

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كلمة من القلب

OBITUARIES

FRANK MUIR

Frank Muir, CBE, writer, and broadcaster, died yesterday aged 77. He was born on February 20, 1920.

Frank Muir was a household favourite on television and radio for 50 years, a man of urbane charm and kind-hearted, intelligent humour of a sort that has now almost disappeared from broadcasting.

Standing well over 6ft, he made himself all the more noticeable by smoking a pipe and affecting a bow-tie. He was both intellectually and sartorially smart, and his flair with words came across not only in his scripts, but in his ability to ad lib. He was a master of the outrageous pun, and once described himself as "a manufacturer of wit substitute"; but the wit was real enough, if ephemeral because of the transient media in which he worked.

Frank Muir was the son of a marine engineer from New Zealand, and was educated at Chatham House School, Ramsgate, and Leyton County High School. He left at 14, when his father died, to work for a firm of carbon-paper manufacturers, and did not go to university until he was elected as the celebrity lecturer of St Andrews University in the late 1970s. Instead, he took his own path down the byways of English letters, reading voraciously and memorising many of the quirky ideas and turns that would later serve as

cornic material. He had a great respect and love for books, and said his hobbies were "book-collecting and 'staring silently into space'".

From 1940 to 1946 he served in the RAF, spending 18 months as a photographer in Iceland and getting his first taste of showbusiness in station concert parties, where he began to be noticed as a promising comedian. He claimed to have had a "soft" war, never having fired a shot in anger, and it was in the RAF that he started to write comedy sketches. After the war he sent material to Ted Kavanagh, a writer for ITMA, which led to work in radio.

His breakthrough came when the comedian Jimmy Edwards went into a show called *The Navy Mixture*, and Muir was invited to write his material. The writer for the show's other stars, Dick Bentley and Joy Nichols, was Denis Norden, and the producer of the show, Charles Maxwell, soon commissioned Norden and Muir to write a new series, *Take It From Here*, which went on air in 1948.

After a faltering start, it became a fixture, and one of the most popular radio programmes of the 1950s, with more than 300 editions in 11 years. It broke new ground in radio comedy by prevailing upon the listener's intelligence and abandoning quickfire gags in favour of allusions and wordplay. The programme's most lasting invention was "The Glums", a low-life antidote to the wholesome, homely families that in those days ruled the airwaves. The Glums, with their mournful



voices, became a prototype of what is now known as situation comedy, as well as influencing *The Goon Show*. Edwards played the bullying father, Bentley the morose son, and June Whitfield the doting fiancée, Etn.

Muir and Norden now began writing shows for Bentley and Norden, and contributing to *In All Directions*, with Peter Ustinov and Peter Jones. During the 1950s the pair moved

into television with *And so to Bentley*, and *Whack-O!*, which featured Edwards as an apologetic headmaster.

Muir and Norden soon became famous as droll, quick-witted performers, too. In 1956 they helped to launch the radio panel game, *My Word!* — a show which required them to weave a tall story around a well-known quotation or saying, so as to end with an ingeniously pun-

ning punchline. It ran for 24 years, and its companion, *My Music*, ran for 24.

When *Take It From Here* finally came to an end, Muir and Norden became assistants to Eric Maschwitz, the head of light entertainment at BBC Television, with a brief to encourage new writers. In 1964 their scriptwriting partnership (though not their friendship) was dissolved after 17 years, and Muir became the BBC's assistant head of light entertainment, where he worked on *Till Death Us Do Part* and *Stepie and Son*.

Three years later he left the BBC to join the newly franchised ITV contractor London Weekend Television, as head of entertainment, but the company struggled to fulfil its ambitious promises, and when the managing director, Michael Peacock, was dismissed, Muir and other senior executives resigned in protest.

Muir now "reverted to being self-employed", but most freelances would envy his idea of the quiet life, for he could be seen and heard on television and radio once or twice a week. On radio he had his own series, an anthology of jokes and sketches, presented with Alfred Marks and called *Frank Muir Goes into...* He was also one of the suave team captains on the television word-game *Call My Bluff!*, opposite Patrick Campbell and then Arthur Marshall.

His readiness with an elegant tale was beguiling, but his creative capacity was scarcely being stretched. His manner and distinctive voice also made him a natural for television advertising, and a genera-

JACK HEWIT



Jack Hewit, a wartime member of MI5, died on December 30 aged 80. He was born on May 17, 1917.

HOWEVER unfairly, Jack Hewit's name will always be linked with that of Guy Burgess — though the two men had not met since Burgess's defection in 1951. But for a decade and more Hewit had a sexual relationship with him, part of the time as Burgess's live-in boyfriend. Politics apart, this was an association not without danger, as in the 1930s and 1940s (and, indeed, throughout the 1950s) homosexual conduct was still frequently and savagely punished by the courts.

It could not be said that Burgess led Hewit astray. He was already a promiscuous, practising homosexual when, at the age of 17, he first met Burgess (who was then working for the BBC). At the time Hewit was dancing in the chorus of a touring revue called *No, No, Nanette*. It was not until a year later, however, that they began their relationship after encountering each other at a lounge party held within the portals of the War Office.

Born in Gateshead, the son of a metal worker, Hewit endured a difficult childhood suffering from the bullying of his contemporaries and the unwelcome attentions of a sadistic father. Indulged by his mother, the artistic and sensitive young boy went to ballet classes and was awarded a scholarship. Denied his chance to go on the stage by his father, he fled south and eventually ended up living in drab digs in Sussex Gardens, Paddington. Burgess's flat in Chester Square, Belgravia, seemed to him, by contrast, intensely glamorous.

Although not well-educated, Hewit had a quick and ready wit, together with an innate intelligence, and these attributes helped him to hold his own at the various parties he was taken to. Before long he had met Anthony Blunt (with whom for a brief period he lived), as well as Harold Nicolson, E. M. Forster, W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears. All became friends, some became lovers.

When war broke out Hewit joined Group 27 of the 53rd Royal Artillery Regiment. After training he was seconded to MI5 at the request of Guy Liddell, whom he had met through Burgess. He spent some time "compromising intelligence targets" in London's diplomatic community during the early years of the war. Through this work Hewit became aware of the depth of involvement of Burgess, Philby and Blunt with the Russians. But he kept his own

counsel and in 1944 was sent to Germany to work in counter-intelligence.

Unwittingly he had during the early 1940s revealed some aspects of his MI5 work to Burgess. Hewit had been intercepting calls between Henslein, the Czechoslovak Quisling, and some fairly prominent rightwingers within the Conservative Party. He rather unwisely imparted this information to Burgess, who immediately asked him to monitor all telephone calls made through the switchboard of the Goring Hotel, where MI5 had sent him to work.

The end of the war found Hewit sharing Victor Rothschild's house in Bentick Street with Burgess, Blunt and others. Goronwy Rees was a frequent visitor, as was their landlord. A lot of wine was drunk and the general atmosphere was relaxed and indiscreet. Burgess, in particular, used to get very drunk and made no secret of his political leanings.

Hewit, being an intelligent man, tried to ignore Burgess's left-wing boasting — but that did not stop him from being astonished when he learnt that Burgess was about to be posted by the Foreign Office to the United States.

Hewit himself worked for Unesco after the war, but in 1948 he returned to England and once again shared a flat with Burgess. This domestic arrangement was interrupted when Burgess was posted to Washington, but he soon returned to England in disgrace after various brushes with highway patrols for drunken driving.

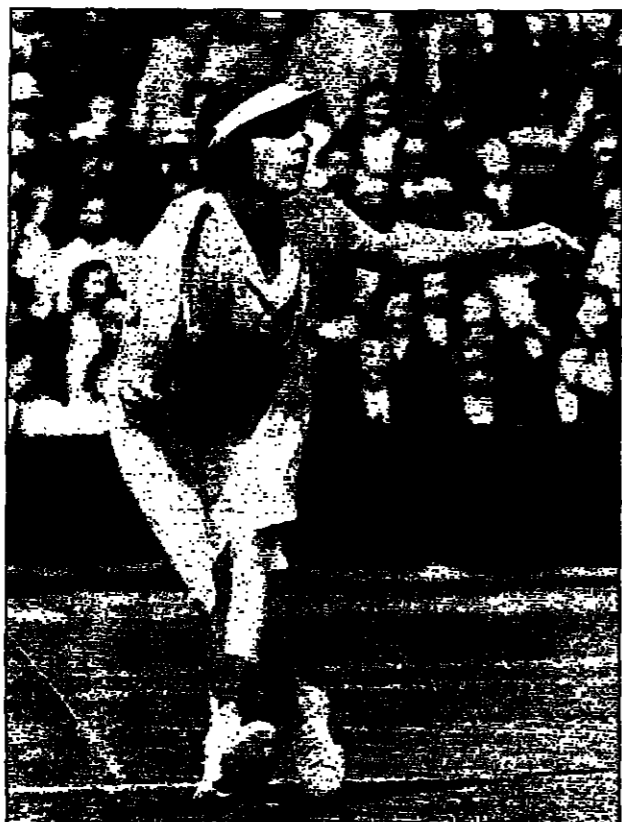
The game was now nearly up. Hewit realised when Burgess failed to return to the flat over the weekend of May 25, 1951, that something had gone badly wrong. He had overheard Burgess talking and hearing a furious argument with someone with a foreign accent in the sitting room of the flat a couple of nights previously. Hewit claimed to have known straight away that Burgess had defected, though he always remained convinced that he had not intended to end up in Moscow, but was supposed merely to assist Donald Maclean in escape.

He immediately realised that he himself would be under suspicion. In desperation he contacted Blunt, who came over to the flat and removed as many incriminating documents as he could. Despite this clean-up, the ensuing hue and cry meant that Hewit became the object of official attention. Over the next few years he was interrogated many times, but his real role in the defection may never be known. His great affection for Burgess was to colour the rest of his life.

Eventually he joined the Army to escape the unwelcome publicity, and later he enrolled in the junior ranks of the Civil Service, where he worked until his retirement in 1977. He always loved the theatre, and his artistic ability enabled him to write a story for young children entitled *Tales of Cedric*, which was published in 1991.

He enjoyed talking about his past and assisted many writers with their books on espionage. His most treasured possession was a small sketchbook filled with caricatures by Burgess of all their friends. He is survived by two nieces.

HELEN WILLS MOODY



Helen Wills Moody, tennis champion, died on January 1 aged 92. She was born on October 6, 1905.

HELEN WILLS MOODY'S eight Wimbledon singles titles formed a record that was unsurpassed until 1990 when Martina Navratilova won her ninth. Moody also won seven American, and four French singles titles. The hallmark of her play was the power of her ground strokes and the unwavering depth she gave them. Her concentration was so intense that she gave the impression of ignoring the score — which her superiority almost enabled her to do. She was so well-armed at all points and her anticipation was so accurate that she seemed to control the game entirely, from her favourite position on the baseline.

Born Helen Wills, she grew up in fashionable Berkeley, where her father was a successful doctor. Her precocity was apparent when she joined the local club at 14 and took a set off the best junior. But her

passion for the game, which never showed in her behaviour on court, was not allowed to interfere with her studies at the University of Southern California, nor to undermine her interest in art.

Even so, she was runner-up when still 16 in the US championship, and she won her first title there in the following year, 1923. In her first appearance at Wimbledon in 1924 — an atmosphere she came to love above all the others — she suffered her only defeat in nine tournaments there, losing to Kitty Godfree in the final. The following year she stayed in America to complete her studies, and in 1926 appendicitis kept her at home.

Earlier that year, on the Riviera, she had her only encounter with Suzanne Lenglen, losing in two sets a match which answered few of the questions subsequently raised about their relative merits. Fruitless argument as to which was the greater took a great time to die down.

The Times confined itself to the guarded comment that if

each had been at her peak when they met, Wills would have won if the pace of her hitting had denied her opponent the choice of direction in her returns, or lost if the French girl, by her placing, could compel her to hit on the run, when her shots were weakest. Lenglen was the more agile. Wills having a reputation for padding about the court, but in that era no woman hit the ball harder than Wills.

Once Lenglen had turned professional in 1926, Wills's supremacy was unquestioned. In 1928 she won Wimbledon, the French championship, and her Wightman Cup matches without losing more than three games in any set. In 1929, on her way to winning her third consecutive Wimbledon title, she lost 16 games in the six matches played, three of them in the final to Helen Jacobs. Her sixth title, in 1933, was harder work. Dorothy Round earning the distinction of being the first player anywhere to take a set since 1927 off Helen Wills Moody, as she had become in 1929 by her marriage to a Californian stockbroker.

Nothing could have been more dramatic than her seventh victory, in 1935, after a bad back had kept her out of the 1934 event. For the fourth time she faced in the final "the other Helen", but now Jacobs had for the first time tasted the satisfaction of beating Moody in the US championship, the previous year.

Jacobs made frequent use of her distinctive "chop" stroke, repeatedly drawing her oppo-

nent to the net, finding the only vulnerable chink in her armour, she won the second set and held match point in the third, but she volleyed out Moody's despairing lob, and did not win another game.

Wherever Moody went, all doors were open to her because of her background and connections. On the Continent she partnered the King of Norway and played against Borotra; in Britain she was presented at Court and was the guest of royalty. Dining at Cliveden she met Bernard Shaw, who gave her a signed copy of *St Joan*. She sat for Augustus John, who gave her the portrait.

In 1929 in a London gallery she held an exhibition of her own still lifes and sketches of her contemporaries. The portraits were notable for the sense of movement she was able to convey. A year later her exhibition in New York was a sell-out. She became a feature writer for *Universal Press*, and wrote for the *Daily Mail* and other publications.

She came back in 1938 to claim her eighth title, and the centre court saw for the last time the tall, elegant figure in calf-length dress, the habitual white eye-shade keeping her hairnet in place. At the end they rose to her, moved more by respect and admiration than by affection for the queen of the game, whose discipline and control stood out even in an age when those qualities were normal.

Her first marriage was dissolved and in 1939 she married her second husband, Aidan Roark, a polo international.

MILESTONES



James Lees-Milne, architectural historian and diarist, died on December 28. He was born on August 6, 1908.

By making a success of a National Trust initiative in the 1930s and 1940s, James Lees-Milne's tact and diplomacy did much to save the English stately home. When the trust formed its country houses committee in 1936, Lees-Milne was sent forth as an ambassador to owners struggling with death duties and high maintenance costs to persuade them that there could be worse fates than to have their properties taken over for the benefit of the nation. It was a job he performed brilliantly, though some criticised his uninhibited

cautious later publishing his eyewitness impressions of the often eccentric owners of the ancient piles whom he encountered. But books such as *Ancestral Voices* (1975) and *Caves of Ice* (1983) justifiably won him a reputation as one of the great diarists of the century. From 1951 to 1966 Lees-Milne was architectural adviser to the National Trust. *Obituary published on December 30.*

Sir John Megaw, PC, CBE, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 1969-80, died on December 27. He was born in Dublin on September 16, 1909.

Coming from a very academic and highly motivated Irish Protestant family, John Me-



gaw switched from classics to law at Cambridge. He joined Gray's Inn and gained the Certificate of Honour in the Bar Finals in 1933. He also twice played rugby for Ireland. He took silk in 1953, and the following year was also given silk in Northern Ireland. He became Recorder of Middlesbrough in 1957, and in 1958 he was elected a Bencher at Gray's Inn. Later he was to fight strongly against the erosion of the independence of the Inns of Court. In 1961 he was appointed to the High Court Bench, and soon became President of the Restrictive Practices Court. He was promoted to the Court of Appeal in 1969 and was made a Privy Counsellor. He was the last judge to put on the black cap at the Old Bailey. *Obituary published on December 31.*

Danilo Dolci, Italian sociologist and social campaigner, died on December 30. He was born on June 28, 1924.

Danilo Dolci was a crusader for the Sicilian poor in their struggle against the misery imposed through the terror of the Mafia and the apathy of the central Italian Government. Like Gandhi, he was an advocate of civil disobedience but not violence; he used public fasts and marches to shame the authorities into action. He was born near Trieste, but when he saw the poverty in Sicily on a visit in 1952, he decided to settle there. He fought for the teaching of new farming methods, more medical aid, and an end to illiteracy and child labour. He tussled with the Italian authorities, but was an international celebrity throughout the 1960s. So-called "Dolci committees" were set up in Britain and elsewhere to raise funds in support of his work. As recently as 1982 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. *Obituary published on January 1.*

PERSONAL COLUMN

DEATHS
WINDSOR - Owen Windsor (nephew of King George VI) died 31st December 1997 after a long illness. A remarkable character, lively with wit and witless, friend and foe alike, and a great friend to many. Funeral service on Friday 9th January at Alderholt Crematorium at 12 noon. Family flowers only, but donations to the Red Cross, Flat 11 welcome to the house afterwards.

TICKETS FOR SALE
REPERTORY THEATRE Guildford
P.O. Box 496, Virginia Street, London E1 9ES. Tel 01753 709077

TRUSTEE ACTS
NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to section 27 of the Companies Act 1985 that any person holding a share in the capital of the company in the name of any of the trustees, administrators and executors of the estate of the late Mrs. Maudie Elizabeth Gwynne, who died on 12th October 1997, is requested to send particulars in writing to the undersigned in order to enable the trustees to be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the will of the late Mrs. Gwynne.

LEGAL NOTICES
In the matter of The Marlow Trust
I, the undersigned, being the trustee of the Marlow Trust, do hereby give notice that the said trust is to be wound up and that the assets of the trust are to be sold and the proceeds thereof distributed to the beneficiaries of the trust.

PROBATE GRANT
The will of the late Mrs. Maudie Elizabeth Gwynne, who died on 12th October 1997, is proved to the satisfaction of the court by the undersigned, who is the executor of the will.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
MEMORIAL SERVICE for the late Mrs. Maudie Elizabeth Gwynne, who died on 12th October 1997, will be held on Friday 9th January at 12 noon at Alderholt Crematorium.

COURT & SOCIAL
PORTUGUESE MARRIAGES AND MARRIAGES
Please send Court Page announcements by post to: Mrs. J. Nogueira, Court & Social Announcements, The Times, PO Box 496, Virginia Street, London E1 9ES. Tel: 0171 782 7347. Fax: 0171 782 7725.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE TELEPHONE 0171-680 6878 OR FAX: 0171-481 9313

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
NOTICES are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

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Gains across the board

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
407	407	407	407
407	407	407	407
407	407	407	407

BANKS

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997	1997	1997	1997
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100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997	1997	1997	1997
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100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BUILDING MATERIALS

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Low	High	Low	High
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CHEMICALS

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BANKS

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100	100	100	100

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BUILDING MATERIALS

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

CHEMICALS

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
407	407	407	407
407	407	407	407
407	407	407	407

BANKS

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997	1997	1997	1997
Low	High	Low	High
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100
100	100	100	100

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT



BIOTECH 30 Reality overdose sees the shares oversold

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY JANUARY 3 1998

WEEKEND MONEY SECTION 2

Shoppers carry on spending despite rate rises

By Janet Bush Economics Editor CONSUMERS appear to be displaying considerable resilience in the face of higher interest rates...

Within these figures, credit card lending fell back slightly, dropping to £30 million from £349 million in October.

In reaction to the figures, Ms David said: "The stronger than expected total net lending figure suggests that the five interest rate hikes since the election have yet to dampen consumers' appetite for credit."

November's credit figures coincided with the latest sales figures from The John Lewis Partnership, which provided the first firm evidence that the Christmas shopping season took off after a very slow start in early December.

trading, said that John Lewis's clearance sale had started well, with most of its branches showing double-digit growth last Saturday, the first day of the sale.

expectations. The Knickerbox business went under, citing poor Christmas sales. However, accumulating evidence of a late burst in activity on the high street yesterday helped to lift shares in retailers.

Copper trader faces £100m fraud hearing

By Paul Durman

CHARLES VINCENT and the Winchester Commodities Group he founded are being sued for damages and compensation for their part in an alleged fraud of Codelco, the Chilean copper company that claims to have been cheated out of about \$175 million (£107 million).

founder, are reputed to have paid themselves £10 million apiece in 1993-94, and £15 million each the following year.

als and Metallgesellschaft, the German group. The four Winchester companies named in the Codelco writ are Winchester Trading, Winchester Brokerage, Winchester Commodities Group and Winchester (USA).



Charles Vincent earned the nickname Copperfingers for his spectacular trading success

Buoyant start on stock market

By Paul Durman and Michael Clark

THE London stock market made a bright start to the year, a 58-point rise in the FTSE 100 index representing a large stride towards the end-of-year targets set by leading investment houses.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES table with columns for Index, Value, and Change.

LONDON MONEY table with columns for Instrument, Rate, and Term.

STERLING table with columns for Location, Rate, and Term.

DOLLAR table with columns for Location, Rate, and Term.

NORTH SEA OIL table with columns for Instrument, Price, and Term.

GOLD table with columns for Location, Price, and Term.

Chemicals sale ICI will soon sell businesses worth more than £1 billion as the company speeds up its exit from industrial chemicals.

Tempus tips A recovery in the housebuilding sector, a squeeze among drinks companies, resilient aluminium prices and further consolidation in the chemicals sector, are being forecast by Carl Mortished, Tempus editor, who names his six favourite shares for the new year.

Sun Life issues writ to recover £5m from fund

By Caroline Merrell

SUN LIFE of Canada has issued a writ against the former parent company of Confederation Life to recover £5 million from a joint fund set up to pay the victims of pensions mis-selling.

compensation liabilities of more than £20 million. About £10 million of this has already been paid out.

Japanese carmakers bring new jobs to UK

By Kevin Eason Motoring Editor

JAPANESE carmakers embark next week on a round of expansion that will bring hundreds of new jobs to Britain and raise the pace of competition for sales in Europe.

which now tops £1.5 billion in total. Although the Aveniris is a replacement for the Carina E, Toyota executives want to increase sales by 25 per cent.

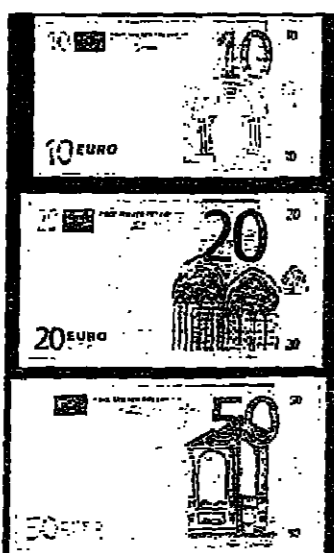
6.69% (7.0% APR) MORTGAGE RATE FIXED UNTIL JANUARY 2003.

6.69% (7.0% APR) With uncertainty about interest rates, now is the perfect time to know exactly what you will be paying until January 2003.

A WEEK IN THE CITY The week brought the usual end-of-year stock market rally, and a fresh batch of businessmen received gongs. Tills began to ring for embattled retailers, and New Year's Day brought two deals together worth nearly £700 million.

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Countdown to introduction of the euro gathers speed



January 1
UK assumes the Presidency of the European Union for six months.

February
The European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the European Central Bank, is expected to present its final report on the progress that the 15 members of the EU have made in meeting the Maastricht treaty's economic convergence criteria. The European Commission will present its own report in parallel.

March
Yuk: Britain hosts an informal meeting of Ecofin, which groups the EU's finance ministers. They will consider reports from the European Monetary Institute and the Commission and are expected

Our economics editor sets out the key dates in the build-up to European monetary union on January 1, 1999 — and beyond

to produce a recommendation of which countries should be eligible to join the European single currency. This recommendation will then be passed to the Council of Ministers.

April
The European Parliament will make its own recommendation regarding participation in economic and monetary union. The German Parliament will debate EMU. It has the constitutional responsibility of judging whether Germany has met the convergence criteria.

May 13
Brussels: The Council of Ministers, comprising heads of state and governments, will take the final decision on which countries will join the single currency. Bilateral exchange rates will be decided and then denoted by central banks.

As soon as possible after participants are chosen. Executive appointments to the European Central Bank are made. Testing of systems for the change-over to the single currency begins. The European System of Central Banks begins production of euro

banknotes. Member states begin production of euro coins.

June/July
Cardiff: European Council meeting marks the end of Britain's Presidency of the European Union. Austria takes over the Presidency.

September
Likely month for German election.

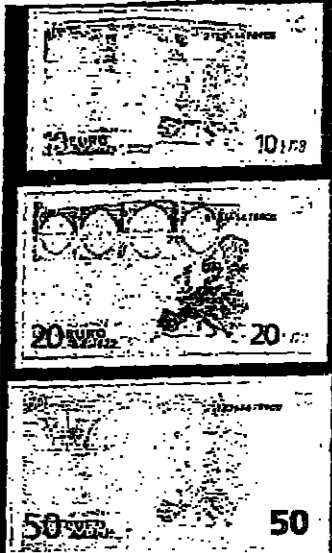
January 1, 1999
Germany takes over the Presidency of the European Union. European monetary union begins. The euro becomes a currency in its

own right. Exchange rates between national currencies and the euro become "irrevocably fixed". A single monetary policy commences with policy decisions taken by the European Central Bank. ECB operations and new issues of government debt all denominated in euro.

January 1, 2002, at the latest
Circulation of euro banknotes and coins and the withdrawal of national banknotes and coins begin. National currencies remain legal tender.

By July 2002 at the latest
National notes and coins cease being legal tender.

JANET BUSH



AT&T rails against Baby Bell ruling

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

AT&T, the largest US telephone company, has vowed to mount a court challenge against a decision to allow local phone companies to enter the US long-distance market.

Sprint, the third-largest phone group and a rumoured AT&T takeover target, will support AT&T's challenge, along with the Federal Communications Commission, the industry regulator.

A federal judge in Texas had rejected as unconstitutional the provisions in the 1996 Telecommunications Act restricting the regional Baby Bells from competing with long-distance carriers in the \$80 billion market.

The judge had sided with SBC Communications, one of five Baby Bells, arguing that the 1996 Act discriminated against the local service providers forced to demerge from AT&T in 1982.

Mark Rosenblum, an AT&T vice-president, said: "The federal court's decision is inexplicable and clearly erroneous. SBC's suit could only advance the Bell monopolies' goal of frustrating local competition and denying consumers the choice in local service that Congress intends them to have."

Under the Act, the Bells cannot enter the long-distance market until their regional monopolies have been broken up. AT&T and MCI, the second largest carrier that was

recently taken over by WorldCom for \$37 billion, are currently trying to get a foothold in the local markets.

But the Baby Bells are so deeply entrenched in those markets that long-distance carriers are finding it very costly to win residential customers. AT&T has been rumoured to have given up on building its own customer base and instead focused on acquiring a Bell company.

MCI last year announced a \$515 million charge against profits that resulted mainly from the unexpectedly high cost of setting up local service operations. The losses frightened BT shareholders and scuppered a planned takeover of MCI by BT.

Sprint said in a statement: "Sprint is frustrated at the lack of progress in achieving real competition since the Telecommunications Act was passed almost two years ago. It's unfortunate that some Bell companies are apparently spending their resources trying to achieve entry into the long-distance market via decisions from federal district courts in places like Wichita Falls, Texas, rather than comply with the law."

William Kennard, the FCC chairman, said he will seek an immediate appeal of the Texas ruling. He said: "This court has struck down an important provision designed to bring competition to local phone services."



Yolande Beaumont is in charge of the Toyota team of 30 men advising on production

Toyota relies on gentle touch to produce car

BY KEVIN EASON
MOTORING EDITOR

YOLANDE BEAUMONT knows how to assemble a Toyota from the wheels up. The 29-year-old former nurse is the woman the Japanese appointed to help them to make their new car in Britain.

Toyota this month launches into showrooms the Avenis, the mid-range car that will be manufactured at its plant at Burnaston in Derbyshire. The model represents the most complex challenge so far for the £1 billion factory with saloons, hatchbacks and estates running down the same kilometre-long assembly lines.

Engineers have performed more than 6,000 tests on components with designers anxious to ensure the car is made efficiently.

Japanese executives pulled together a team of British workers capable of performing every manufacturing task and able to tell them where improvements in efficiency could be made. Miss Beaumont heads the team, an elite employee in an industry that traditionally appeals to few women. Only about 5 per cent of Toyota's 3,000-strong Burnaston workforce are women. She left the NHS five years ago to join Toyota.

In charge of a team of 30 men, Miss Beaumont is a veteran of eight visits to Japan as she learnt how every nut and bolt of the Avenis was put together so that she could pass her knowledge on to the workforce at Burnaston.

"I suppose I could build a car in my garage if I had to," she said. "But I have to know all the processes the car goes through to advise Toyota how the car can best be made on the assembly lines."

Très cheek

ONE of this year's most eagerly awaited appointments is that of the head of the new European Central Bank, to be decided some time in the spring. This has already caused a breach between the French and German blocs in Europe, so it cannot be entirely a bad thing. The favourite has always been Wim Duisenberg, a Dutchman who is the preference of the Germans. The French, on the other hand, would like the job to go to a Frenchman, *bien sûr*. So the preferred candidate of Jacques Chirac, the French Prime Minister, is Jean-Claude Trichet, Governor of the Bank of France and a long-time ally. Trichet has just been revealed to be in a little spot of bother with his tax returns, but this is *la belle France* and the matter is not seen as a bar to his vaunting ambition.

Chirac has hit on a new tactic to support his man. I understand he has approached Jean-Claude Juncker, the Luxembourg Prime Minister, for his support. Now, the last time I wrote about the Duchy of Luxembourg I received a death threat from one of its inhabitants. Let us just say this time that running this small member state is not one of the top jobs on the world political stage, but he does have a say — some would say a disproportionately large say — at the EU. So Chirac is offering him the presidency of the European Commission from 1999, when that post becomes vacant on the departure of Jacques Santer, in return for backing Trichet. I have no idea whether Chirac believes he can deliver on this promise. But I suggest Juncker gets it in writing.

□ I AM — for obvious reasons — not allowed to name him, but a colleague contacted a certain equity strategist at a big securities house over the holiday. He gave his views on the outlook for 1998 and then, with uncharacteristic modesty, requested anonymity. My colleague asked why. "You're the fifth person I've had from the press, and I'm obviously the only analyst in the City today. If I turn up in every single newspaper tomorrow, my bosses will wonder whether I've done any real work."

Peeling off

NORBERT PETERSEN, senior operations director at Thistle Hotels, has offloaded most of his shares in the company, prompting speculation that he might soon be following Robert Peel, the former chief executive who is leaving the board next month, in heading off to pastures new. But the German-born Petersen, who made almost £140,000 from the sale, insists that he sold the shares simply to pay a tax bill due on January 31.

He acquired the stock as part of last year's flotation, but the group's recent dismal performance has kept them below their 170p float price, forcing Mr Petersen to sell at 156p. "It peevs me no end that I've had to sell the shares at a loss," he said.



what of suggestions that he might be moving on? "At this moment in time I'm not leaving, though we're all waiting to see what the new chief executive will do. It may be possible my face doesn't fit, but I don't waste my time thinking about it. I've got my head down and I'm working my little buttocks off as usual." (Petersen's English, as you see, is fluent but idiosyncratic). I wish him all the best under the new regime.

□ AS IF further proof was needed that I am living in the wrong century, a younger colleague approaches eagerly with news that Ted Baker is giving out chocolate condoms with every purchase. Ted Baker, I learn, is a brand of shirt popular with the young, made by a company that floated on the stock market in the summer. But wouldn't chocolate condoms, er, melt? They're chocolate flavoured, he explains with more than a trace of condescension.

We examine the product. Nowhere on it is the kitemark that official condoms should display, to show they meet the necessary quality standards. I expect they do, though. But there is that funny curved "CE" logo, which confirms they are suitable for very young children. No, I have no idea what to make of it either.

Spray job

BOB AYLING's enthusiasm for the new British Airways livery has extended to Booker airport, near High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, where BA pilots use a small private flying club. Word reaches me that the club's faithful Piper Warriors are being resprayed in BA's gaudy new ethnic colours. Is anyone safe?

MARTIN WALLER



Ayling: livery disease

Global black market boom likely to increase in 1998

BY OUR BUSINESS STAFF

THE world's black market economy is booming, and analysts expect it to get even bigger in 1998.

Governments cannot define exactly the size of the black market, but experts believe that it will soon account for 15 per cent of the economies of the developing world, according to a forecast by *The Economist* magazine.

The report predicts that the black market will be worth

£1.8 trillion, equivalent to the combined economies of Germany and Spain.

However, some economies are "blackier" than others. The shadow markets in Italy and Spain represent 20 per cent of their economies, against 10 per cent in America.

Onerous labour-market regulations, high taxes and red tape are the main causes of the worldwide boom, the survey says. Although most devel-

oped countries have cut income tax rates in recent years, the total tax burden has continued to mount because of increases in social-security contributions or sales taxes.

However, taxation can be less frightening than regulation. *The Economist* says, Russia's underground market is worth more than its official economy, with Moscow shopkeepers visited by 19 government inspectors a year, it adds.

A&L raises mortgage rates to other top lenders' levels

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER, the sixth-largest lender, has increased mortgage rates in response to November's base rate rise.

The increase, which puts up the cost of borrowing to 8.7 per cent, means that a £50,000 interest-only repayment mortgage will rise by £10 a month to £329 a month.

The increase for A&L's 500,000 borrowers comes into effect from Monday. Base

rates have risen five times since the general election last May. Alliance & Leicester is now back in line with other big lenders, such as Halifax and Abbey National.

Alliance & Leicester said that it had delayed responding to November's base rate rise because it did not want to burden borrowers with higher mortgage payments just before Christmas. This latest increase in mortgage pay-

ments means that the monthly cost of paying off a £50,000 mortgage has risen by around £50 since May.

For millions of homeowners whose mortgages are on an annual review, such as borrowers with Halifax, the full effect will not be felt until April. Also, a decrease in mortgage interest tax relief at source (Miras) in April will add a further £11 a month to the cost of a £50,000 mortgage.

Northern Rock hits back

BY MARIANNE CURPIE

NORTHERN ROCK, the building society that shed its mutual status in the autumn to become a bank, has hit back at allegations that its saving and borrowing rates are uncompetitive compared with mutual building societies.

A recent survey claimed that a homeowner with a standard variable rate mortgage for a £20,000 loan would have paid £274 more last year with Northern Rock than Yorkshire Building Society, the cheapest provider.

Northern Rock said only a third of its borrowers had a loan based on the standard variable rate and that the remainder enjoyed special fixed-rate and discounted deals.

Adam Applegarth, executive director of Northern Rock, said: "Everyone now on our base rate will have had a fixed rate, cashback or discounted product in the past."

Writ orders Bell to remove Lowe name

BY CHRIS AVRES

SIR TIM BELL, the media guru who created Baroness Thatcher's "Iron Lady" image, has received a writ ordering his company to take the name Lowe out of its Lowe Bell public relations empire.

The writ was issued by Lowe International, a division of Interpublic, the US advertising giant. One of the most senior figures at Lowe International is Frank Lowe, a former colleague of Sir Tim's. The writ could result in Lowe Bell having to pay damages for infringement of trademark.

Sir Tim, a former head of Saatchi and Saatchi, appears to be ready to jettison the Lowe name. He is understood to be baffled by the writ, which he received on the Monday before Christmas.

Lowe Bell is owned by Chime Communications, a London-listed company in which Sir Tim's family holds an estimated £3 million stake. It includes both political and financial public relations companies, plus a marketing and

events business. Lowe International's writ could be a response to Sir Tim's return to advertising last month with Chime's £21 million purchase of HHCL. The agency has gained a high profile after devising successful campaigns for blackcurrant Tango, Robinson's squash and Pot Noodles.

The commercial threat of the acquisition to Lowe International was heightened by the involvement of WPP, one of the world's largest marketing companies, which helped to fund the deal. WPP is a major US rival of Interpublic. The return to advertising has been regarded as a shrewd move for Sir Tim, whose reputation as an architect has held back his career as a political lobbyist and spin doctor under the Labour Government. Recently he has been the subject of candid revelations about his private life.

Sir Tim's career began in the 1970s when he joined Saatchi and Saatchi. He impressed the agency by helping

to secure the Conservative Party as a long-standing client. However, he left abruptly in 1985 after the Saatchi brothers reportedly refused to give him an equal partnership.

Sir Tim's relationship with Mr Lowe spans 25 years, although it is not known if the writ from Lowe International has come after personal conflict. The working relationship ended in 1989 when Sir Tim led the £8 million management buyout of Lowe Bell from the Lowe Howard Spink advertising agency.

Lowe Bell came to the market five years later through the reverse takeover of Charterwell Group. The re-named group has performed impressively, with its shares rising from 15p in 1995 to its present level of about 50p.

Sir Tim's most recent tasks at Lowe Bell have been to advise the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, and the Egyptian Government on how to boost tourism after November's Luxor massacre.

Weekend Money, pages 53-64

Sir Tim Bell is known for Thatcher's "Iron Lady" image

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Buy	Bank	Sell
Australia \$	2.01	Bank	2.43
Austria Sch	20.17	Belgium F	24.6
Canada C\$	94.25	Denmark Kr	59.30
Denmark Kr	2.44	France F	6.55
Cyprus Cyp\$	0.911	Germany DM	2.36
Denmark Kr	11.87	Greece Dr	455
Finland Mk\$	9.51	Hong Kong \$	13.54
France F	10.3	Ireland P	1.11
Germany DM	3.12	Israel N\$	1.20
Greece Dr	494	Italy Lira	2097
Hong Kong \$	13.54	Japan Yen	231.45
Ireland P	1.11	Netherlands Gld	0.281
Israel N\$	1.20	Netherlands Gld	3.525
Italy Lira	2097	New Zealand \$	2.97
Japan Yen	231.45	Norway Kr	12.74
Netherlands Gld	0.281	Portugal Esc	314.52
Netherlands Gld	3.525	S Africa Rd	7.75
New Zealand \$	2.97	Spain Ptas	203.29
Norway Kr	12.74	Sweden Kr	13.08
Portugal Esc	314.52	Switzerland Fr	7.24
S Africa Rd	7.75	Turkey Lira	34757
Spain Ptas	203.29	USA \$	1.747
Sweden Kr	13.08		
Switzerland Fr	7.24		
Turkey Lira	34757		
USA \$	1.747		

THE SUNDAY TIMES

THE LAST EMPIRE

Greg Hutchings faces growing pressure to break up his group, Tomkins, the last of the great 1980s conglomerates. Will 1998 be the year he succumbs?

Business Focus — The Sunday Times tomorrow

سكنا من الامل

Happy New Year. At least it was on the London Stock Exchange. The FTSE-100 index, bellwether of the UK market, rose by more than 1 per cent on the first trading day of the new year, a day on which there seemed, for a change, to be reason to suspect skulduggery.

In New York, the mild fluctuations of the Dow Jones average suggested an optimistic mood. In the Far East, at least the Nikkei index managed to end the year above the suspect 15,000 level in Tokyo. And in Hong Kong, the Hang Seng stayed comfortably above the equally dread local landmark of 10,000.

Such early tidings may not tell investors much about prospects for 1998. They still offer encouragement, notably in the Far East, where the New Year is regarded, for no very good reason, as a moment to set the tone for the new calendar year.

Would that there should be such confidence in London. In reality, the FTSE index enters 1998 under a cloud. So jittery were fund managers and traders that market administrators set up special arrangements for the festive season to discourage the more desperate from trying to cook the books.

On New Year's Eve, temptations were greatest to manipulate the price of individual stocks, or of the index, to make derivatives contracts turn out right or to make performance over the year look as rosy as possible. The success for

Stock Exchange needs resolution



COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

this year's marketing effort could depend on the odd percentage point of 1997 gains.

Attempts to allay fears of manipulation were necessary but bizarre. Trading was cut short on traditionally thin days and a panel of experts, unnamed to protect their spurious authority, were brought in to weed out rogue transactions. In the event, the unimpeachable experts adjusted end-year closing prices of 11 out of the 100 top stocks.

The effect was nominal. Instead of the FTSE ending 15 points higher, it officially ended 3.5 points up, which makes little difference, the FTSE lost 50 points, roughly 1 per cent, in the last few minutes of trading.

Do not shout it too loudly, but Europe's premier share market is embarrassingly short of the liquidity that heavy trading should provide. Yesterday, trading was a sixth of brokers' break-even rate and the most-traded stock was Centrica, a relic of old British Gas that is worth a tenth of Glaxo and probably should not be in FTSE-100.

Quiet seasons will always be quiet. But the reform of Stock Exchange trading, which put transactions in the top 100 stocks

on to the order-driven Sets system while leaving traditional wholesalers as a fallback, has cut liquidity in half, exposed London's weaknesses and made the quoted index too volatile and easy to manipulate. John Kemp-Welch, chairman of the Stock Exchange, should have had no trouble formulating his new year resolution. Time will tell whether he has chosen to resign or to act. Even on January 3, however, time is not on his side.

Offices are no block to a fair year

The only thing that can be said with any certainty about the various predictions being batted around the City during this last dead week of the holiday season is that they are wrong. Totally wrong, in some cases, the spread of forecasts on the FTSE 100 index is so wide that most must be mis-

guided. Slightly but significantly wrong, in others; it is still too early to assess, and to translate into meaningful data, the effect on world markets of the Asian crisis.

But one or two cases can be stated without too much risk of looking silly in 12 months' time. The British commercial property market is set for another fair year, if only because the market moves too slowly to become derailed by fast-moving events. There is a looming shortage of good space in London, and speculative building, even if it returns, cannot physically transform this shortage to glut before the millennium — assuming the banks are silly enough to advance the funds to speculators.

This suggests that the consensus among property experts, that despite the peaks scaled in 1997, we are not heading for a late 1980s-style crash in 1998, may be among the safer of these start-of-the-year prognostications. One

factor not necessarily taken into account everywhere is the extraordinary strength of foreign investment in the UK property scene. DTZ Debenham Thorpe, which has pointed out that this stood at a record £4.2 billion last year, is shooting for £2.5-£3 billion in 1998, but this may turn out to be overly pessimistic.

It is worth spelling out just why the UK commercial property has proved such a magnet for overseas buyers. There is clearly the attraction to "flight money" of assets that are rather more likely to hold their value than an office block in downtown Seoul, and a market that has outperformed competing investment destinations in mainland Europe during the 1990s.

The market here is generally more liquid, with turnover levels averaging £20 billion a year, which means overseas buyers know they can exit when they wish. Despite last year's doubling of Stamp Duty, entry and

exit costs are considerably lower than elsewhere, while the UK lease structure tends to favour the commercial property landlord more than in other, more regulated countries.

The only certainty in property is that there is a cycle and that it will turn one day. But for the commercial sector that day still looks a long way off.

Three to two on at Ladbroke

Last year was extraordinary for bookies. The big players recovered from the ravages of the National Lottery and two of the big three changed hands for truly big money.

Less than a month after Nomura, the Japanese securities house, bought William Hill for a whopping £700 million from the shell of Brent Walker, Bass aims to sell the Coral chain to Ladbroke for an equally punchy £375 million. Add to this Ladbroke's £31 million purchase of AR Dennis in February and the Tote's £41 million slice of the betting industry has changed beyond recognition. A clue to these prices is con-

tained in the results now being turned in by the big three. Ladbroke reported profits up by almost a third to £43 million. Coral profits doubled to £33 million. And William Hill is estimated to have lifted earnings by half to about £75 million.

Such returns could only be dreamed of in the days after the 1994 National Lottery launch, when 600 betting shops were closed as punters switched allegiance. In the mid-1960s, more than 16,000 bookies flourished, against 8,500 today.

The key to recovery has been a combination of deregulation and better service. Seedy smoke-filled gambling dens have largely been replaced by glass-fronted shops offering a wider range of games in a more appealing ambience. Today's horse-loving punter can also put coins in a slot machine and play lottery-style numbers games while having a cup of coffee and a snack. There are even toilets.

The Coral deal has been carefully arranged to avoid objections to the dominant power it would appear to give Ladbroke to shorten odds. Even so, the competition authorities may well intervene, spurred on by prominent punters such as, just possibly, the Foreign Secretary. The best protection for punters could, however, come from newer and competitive forms of betting. Ladbroke and its peers can ill afford to ignore the lessons of the past three years, merger or no.

ICI plans £1bn disposal as revamp is speeded up

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

BUSINESSES worth more than £1 billion are likely soon to be sold by ICI as it speeds up its exit from industrial chemicals.

The company, which sold more than £3.5 billion of operations last year, yesterday said that it expected to make further substantial disposals this year. It is expected that those sales — likely to be of businesses in ICI's traditional heartland of Teesside and

northwest England — will be struck in the near future.

ICI, of which Charles Miller Smith is chief executive, yesterday signalled a fresh round of sales after completing the sale of polyester polymer businesses in the UK and the United States and a stake in a Taiwanese joint venture to DuPont for £800 million. The completion is part of an agreement reached last July for DuPont to buy a bundle of

businesses worth £1.8 billion from ICI.

ICI is pushing through a huge transformation to take the company away from bulk industrial chemicals, which are vulnerable to cyclical swings, and into the consumer and specialised chemicals markets. Last year it bought Unilever's speciality chemicals division for £4.8 billion and set out a disposal programme to reduce its indus-

trial interests and raise £3 billion over three years. It has exceeded that target in six months and is likely to keep up the momentum of quick sales. It is thought that potential buyers have already been looking at the remaining parts of ICI's bulk operations.

It is likely that ICI will go into the next century with no bulk chemicals businesses. ICI yesterday said that the changes to the business it had made in 1997 had made its portfolio "less capital intensive and less cyclical with a much greater emphasis on research and technology".

ICI disposals last year included a 62 per cent stake in ICI Australia, sold for £1 billion; the £1.8 billion deal with DuPont; explosives businesses in the Americas and Europe sold for £230 million; a 51 per cent holding in its South African explosives company, sold for £70 million; its North American Forest Products, sold for £140 million; its UK fertiliser operation, sold for £200 million with a deferred further payment of up to £50 million; its methylanilines and derivatives business, sold for £67 million; and property interests, including its Millbank headquarters, sold for £120 million.



Charles Miller Smith is leading ICI from industrial chemicals to consumer chemicals

Ocean pays £54m for haulier

OCEAN GROUP, the freight and support services company, is to bolster its presence in the European land-based logistics market through the acquisition of Intexo, a pan-European long-distance haulier, for up to £54.9 million (Fraser Nelson writes).

Ocean, already a major player in the air freight market, is to pay £18.9 million for a 67 per cent stake in Intexo and has the option to buy the remaining shares from its management for up to £36 million. The acquisition is being funded from the £320 million that Ocean raised by selling its offshore support division. The company intends to buy other European logistics firms.

Intexo last year made an estimated profit of £3 million on sales of £70 million.

Vodafone sells its Pacific Link stake

BY FRASER NELSON

VODAFONE, the telecoms group, has finally severed its links with the Hong Kong market by selling its stake in Pacific Link, the region's fourth-largest mobile phone company, for £100 million.

Hongkong Telecom, which is 51 per cent owned by Cable & Wireless, will take control of Pacific Link on Monday at a total cost of £380 million — becoming the largest player in the region's growing mobile phone market.

Vodafone, which owns 35 per cent of Pacific Link, will book a profit of about £30 million on its disposal. It will then become almost completely reliant on the European telecoms market.

Disposal talks have been going on for the past two months, and were dependent on the agreement of First Pacific, the property and

banking conglomerate which owns 65 per cent of Pacific Link.

More than 800,000 customers use Pacific Link's service. The latest available figures, for 1996, show that it made a profit of £24 million after tax and had assets of £105 million.

Hongkong Telecom plans to cut down costs by pooling Pacific Link with its CSL mobile phone division which owns the One-2-One brand. With the GSM and D-AMPS networks used by Pacific Link, Hongkong Telecom said it would be the only company to offer comprehensive coverage across the region.

Vodafone shares, one of the best performers of 1997, gained 6p to 445p yesterday. Shares of Cable & Wireless, which have been badly affected by its exposure to the Far East, gained 7p to 542p.

Deeside gets pizza factory

DEESIDE in North Wales is poised to become one of the pizza-making centres of Europe after a deal by a leading producer to set up a big new factory.

The move by Paramount Foods will initially bring 35 new jobs to Deeside, followed by a further 50 over the next two years.

Paramount has agreed a 16-year lease on a moth-balled Heinz sauce manufacturing plant.

The company said it would make 50 million pizza crusts a year at Deeside, adding to the 75 million crusts produced each year at its existing factory in Salford, Greater Manchester.

The head office of Paramount will relocate to the new base from Salford.

Wyko set to grow for £15m

Wyko, the precision engineer, has set aside £15 million to buy 20 new distribution branches around the country for its machinery refurbishment operation and has bought MR Transmission (MRT), a parts distributor, for £60,000.

MRT will supply bearings to the Chesterfield branch of Wyko's motor refurbishing company, Lewis Berl.

Wyko, based in Dudley, West Midlands, made pre-tax profits in 1996 of £5.1 million, up from the previous year's £1.66 million.

Friendly sale

Friendly Hotels is to raise £16.1 million by selling two Quality Friendly Hotels to a Danish property group. The company is to lease back the hotels for £1.34 million a year, and will continue to operate them. After it has sold the hotels, in Loughborough and Wolverhampton, its debt will be cut to £45 million with a further £12 million payable over the next 15 years. The company will be left with a portfolio of 85 Quality Friendly Hotels and 154 Comfort Inns.

KBC deal

KBC Technology, the oil consultancy, is to buy the rights to a specialist computer program from Honeywell, the US software house, for £3.6 million. In its first acquisition since coming to the market last March, KBC is buying the rights to Sim-Series, a program that helps to simulate aspects of oil processing. KBC shares, floated at 270p, rose 8p to 309½p.

Microsoft buys dominant Internet e-mail service

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

MICROSOFT, the US software company whose dominant market position is currently under fire from consumer watchdogs in America, has acquired another part of the computer industry.

The group has agreed to buy Hotmail, an Internet company that has the world's largest customer base of e-mail accounts. Hotmail, a privately held company started by two former Apple employees, has around 12 million subscribers. MSN e-mail, a Microsoft division, has 2.5 million subscribers and together they will

far outstrip American OnLine, the previous market leader with 10 million subscribers.

Hotmail is less than two years old and grew exponentially from a standing start by offering its services free. Revenue is generated through the sale of advertising space on the display panels that subscribers use to read and write electronic messages.

The value of the deal was not revealed but when rumours of the acquisition surfaced late last year, analysts said the price tag could be up to \$500 million (£300 million),

although others dispute this. Sabher Bhatia and Jack Smith, Hotmail's co-founders, will share their riches with a number of venture capitalists.

The Hotmail purchase is Microsoft's latest attempt to gain dominance on the Internet. After making Windows, its operating system for personal computers, a universal standard, the group is now waging a battle over access to and content on the internet.

Microsoft is expected to announce a \$1 billion investment in TCI, the largest US cable company, this month.

Car-sale revolution hits hitch

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

WAYNE HUIZENGA, the US billionaire who owns Britain's biggest car rental business, has run into difficulties in his effort to revolutionise America's second-hand car market.

Republic Industries, which Mr Huizenga set up after selling the Blockbuster video chain to Viacom for \$7 billion, is the world's largest car retailer and second-largest rental business. However, building a chain of used-car megastores with non-negotiable price tags is proving a challenge for the colourful businessman.

Republic is expected to take a charge of up to \$150 million (£90 million) against profits this month because of additional costs in setting up 25 AutoNation stores, the first building block of what is expected to become a nationwide chain of big used-car dealerships.

Mr Huizenga, usually seen in a luxury stretch limousine, wants to build a network that

customers trust like a new car dealership.

However, after just a year of operations, he has already had to cut back on customer service. Warranties have been reduced and sales staff have been switched to commission-based pay to raise turnover.



Huizenga: billionaire

The AutoNation stores have yet to show a profit.

Mr Huizenga has defied adversity before. He built Blockbuster from a five-store outfit into a global brand. In the 1970s, he dominated waste management long before it became a recognised profit-spinner. In the past 12 months, he has not ventured into both car retailing and car rentals.

Renting out cars in the US yields notoriously low returns. The price, about \$35 (£20) a day, has not risen for ten years. Republic's rental division includes the National Car Rental Systems and Alamo chains. With its 195 million acquisition of Eurodollar in the UK, Mr Huizenga leaptfrogged Avis Europe and now has the biggest car rental group in Britain.

Mr Huizenga, 59, has a fortune of \$1.7 billion, putting him in the Forbes list of America's 100 richest people.

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Keith McCullagh, left, "can't get his mouth round bad news"; John Padfield will not negotiate publicly; James Noble says investors should heed regulatory risks

Overdose of reality sees biotech shares oversold

Paul Durman analyses the symptoms of a sector that has had its fair share of disappointments

The biotechnology industry will be glad to see the back of 1997. Investors can scarcely be blamed for starting the new year still feeling nauseous from last year's overdose of reality serum.

Optimism, and a tendency towards overoptimism, is a constant companion for biotech companies. Their scientists have to believe that their potential drugs are going to prove an effective treatment for cancer, or arthritis, or heart disease. Intellectually they may know that the odds are stacked against them, but emotionally they are committed. When a company's whole being rests on its research and development of new drugs or medical devices, it is hardly surprising that senior management shares this blue sky ethos.

Last year's lengthy list of

disappointments exposed the risks that investors run if they get swept along by all this enthusiasm. Our table — which includes most of the principal drug development companies, along with interesting oddities like Biocompatibles, Phytopharm, and Oxford Molecular — shows the scale of the share price falls from the year's peaks, mostly achieved in early spring. It is worth noting that companies that made solid progress (Cantab, Chiroscience, Xenova) have been hit almost as badly as those that suffered very obvious setbacks (Biocompatibles, Celltech, Scotia).

With typically no profits and little in the way of sales,

biopharmaceutical and other medical development companies are particularly vulnerable to market sentiment and "newsflow". Some companies respond by continuously drip-feeding the market with good news, much of it of questionable importance. Oxford Molecular, the drug design software company, is a leading culprit. With science-based businesses that are already difficult to understand, the danger is that investors become confused about the real drivers of company value.

Industry followers will have noted that this resoundingly upbeat approach has sometimes led companies to try to gloss over or diminish the significance of their setbacks. While they fall over themselves to explain positive developments, minor disappointments are tucked away and shrouded in scientific jargon. It is surprising how often previously promising projects are declared unimportant when they fail.

Even the industry's leading battalions are prepared to risk their credibility by massaging the message. Keith McCullagh, chief executive of British Biotech, carries the burden of underpinning confidence in the whole sector because of the apparently enormous potential of marimastat, the Oxford company's cancer drug. Yet as one biotech veteran observed this week: "Keith can't get his mouth round bad news."

Investors are rarely deceived by these ploys to accentuate the positive. And in any case, it is impossible to disguise the impact of a serious setback, which drug development companies will inevitably suffer from time to time.

Last year's problems began in earnest in March when the UK's Medicines Control Agency turned down tarabecic, Scotia's treatment for the nerve damage caused by diabetes. Most serious of all was the failure in May of Celltech's septic shock drug in late stage clinical trials — only weeks after extremely encouraging noises from Bayer. Celltech's development partner.

In July British Biotech was forced into a poorly explained

move to extend and expand US trials of zacutax, its pancreatic drug. Jitters about marimastat were exacerbated by a slippage in the expected release date of phase III trial data. British Biotech also had to abandon development of a drug for inflammatory bowel disease because of unexpected side effects.

Biocompatibles killed off one of the few remaining success stories in September when it failed to secure a long-promised licensing deal with Johnson & Johnson for its stents (miniature metal supports for blood vessels) with a body-friendly coating. Alistair Taylor, Biocompatibles' chief executive, made a fool of himself claiming this was "great news" because it would allow the company to seek a deal with a more aggressive partner.

Probably the most spectacular failure came from Stamford Road, whose purported cure for tuberculosis showed absolutely no signs of efficacy in phase III trials.

Besides these lowlights, there were many other less dramatic disappointments. There were some obvious lessons for the sector and its followers. Drugs can and do fail in late stage trials. Even when they appear to work, companies still have to convince the regulators to grant a marketing licence. And even when approved, new medical products can disappoint their owners' optimistic estimates of sales potential.

John Padfield, chief executive of Chiroscience and chairman of the Biotechnology Association, believes that some companies made a rod for their own backs by promising deals by stated deadlines. This is an implicit criticism of Biocompatibles, but the medical coatings company was not alone. Shield Diagnostics, the sector's great success story last year, also failed to deliver a distribution partner for its heart disease test by the year end.

Dr Padfield said: "We have never negotiated our company's deals in public. It's dangerous to say 'we will have this

deal with this company by this day of this month'. Your partner can negotiate with that in mind."

James Noble, British Biotech's former finance director, believes that British investors need to pay more attention to the risks of failing to secure regulatory approval for their drugs. He observes that clever science that excites the PhDs in the biotech companies often fails to impress sceptical investors who must actually administer the drugs to real patients.

The biotech sector must also recognise that relying on larger partners for development help and distribution involves risks as well as benefits. Mr Taylor, of Biocompatibles, said: "You are very much dependent on the whims of your partner. When you sign up with a company, you always know that they have got their own R&D programme and that they're working on similar things to those you're working on."

It would be wrong to be pessimistic. Britain's biotech companies scored some big successes last year, most notably with BPL Therapeutics' role in the cloning of Dolly the sheep — widely acclaimed as the scientific breakthrough of the year.

Less momentarily, though of more immediate commercial significance, were Peptide Therapeutics' licensing deals with SmithKline Beecham and Medeva, Cantab's link-up with Glaxo Wellcome, and Scotia's licensing deal for Foscan, an impressive light-sensitive cancer drug.

Even closer to the market, British companies sought regulatory approvals for the first new or improved drugs developed by the sector. British Biotech led the way by filing for European marketing approval for zacutax in February. More recently, Cortec International applied for approval for macronin, a capsule form of calcitonin, the osteoporosis drug, and Chiroscience filed to register chirocaine, its long-acting local anaesthetic.

Mr Noble believes that market sentiment will recover strongly if zacutax secures approval in the next few months. This would be interpreted as evidence that British Biotech, unlike Scotia, knows what it takes to get drugs approved.

Another potential boost could come from Chiroscience, which must be close to appointing a marketing partner for chirocaine. Biocompatibles could also surprise when it finally agrees a distribution deal for its stents.

It is easy for biotech believers to argue that the sector has been indiscriminately oversold. While this is undoubtedly true, the real difficulty remains identifying those companies with the best chance of success. "Biotechnology is inherently risky," says Dr Padfield. "That's something we've got to live with."

'Stir' Fry displays a seasoned touch in the heat of battle

The legendary England cricket captain, C.B. Fry, was renowned for being a safe pair of hands in the outfield, but the same cannot be said about his grandson, Jonathan Fry, whose life — not to mention his 25-year career in industry — has been characterised by a penchant for risk-taking.

Last year, Mr Fry, still a keen skier at the age of 60, swapped his skis for a bobsleigh to complete the famous Cresta Run at St Moritz, where speeds of up to 80mph are not unknown. "It was the most terrifying thing I've ever done," he admitted. "The G-forces are incredible, and everything in your body is instructing you that you're about to die."

He cited this week's £280 million acquisition of a US chemicals firm by Harrison's & Crossfield, the industrial conglomerate where he is chairman, as another example of his tendency towards risk-taking, although he emphasised that in his business life he only takes calculated risks. The risk involved in the deal was identified by analysts, some of whom questioned the price being paid. But Mr Fry believes it is one worth taking if H&C is to shed successfully its dismal image as an unfocused, underperforming conglomerate with its roots in Far Eastern plantations.

Mr Fry conceded that such a view was justified, but claimed that what had been set in train by the H&C board was nothing less than "a complete and utter revolution". He said: "Today in the City you can only get away with being an unfocused conglomerate if you're very successful. The minute you are tagged as a conglomerate, and the pieces of your conglomerate appear to be working below par, all hell breaks loose. The only solution was to reinvent the company. You couldn't just tinker at the edges." Since his arrival H&C has sold off businesses such as "hardware" merchants, petfoods and flour mills for a total of £480 million, which in value terms means it is more than two thirds through the sell-off.

Although further acquisitions are likely "in due course", Mr Fry said it had made sense to return some cash to shareholders. That will be welcome to investors who snapped up H&C shares at more than £2 only to see its share price halved amid anti-conglomerate sentiment. Recent events have pushed it back up to 41p, but Mr Fry admitted this was still "not a satisfactory level" and improving the share performance is clearly at the top of his agenda. Of help will be the company's move yesterday from the FTSE's Diversified Industrials classification to Chemicals, where the best players trade on multiples of 20 or more compared to H&C's mid-teens, and its change of name to Elements. But the crucial element, as Mr Fry accepts, will be to "make sure we can make money in the new format".

Bill Turcan, H&C chief executive, acknowledges the contribution of Mr Fry since his appointment in September, particularly in putting the new message across to the investment community. "I don't think there's any doubt

the top team at H&C had a credibility gap. If we do make the transition a lot will have been down to him."

Mr Turcan also highlighted some of the facets that have earned Mr Fry, who has spent most of his career with Burmah Castrol, a reputation as a no-nonsense businessman who likes to provoke a reaction. "He is by no means an easy ride as a chairman," he said. "He's got a terrifically sharp mind which can sometimes be alarming. He is so quick to get to the point. He cuts through the relatively less important things. On first impression he appears difficult, he's quite abrupt. He has no time for the pleasantries of life."

But Mr Turcan also paid

you can get them to agree more easily."

Although Mr Fry has become recognised for his talents in dealing with the City, some colleagues point to his great passion for industry. But, as he relates, he was almost put off after being offered a job in the steel industry straight out of Oxford, where he studied classics. "The personnel director took me to lunch at Claridge's, and I thought this was rather good, so when he asked me if I'd like a job I was pretty keen. But he then asked me to spend a week on the night shift at Corby, and that cured me of wanting to work in the steel industry."

Initially he went into advertising and marketing, before six years at McKinsey, the management consultancy, where he admits he probably did more harm than good. "It was a wonderful education. You swarmed around telling people twice your age what to do."

His marketing skills were to come in useful when he joined Burmah Castrol in 1978 at a time when it was still reeling from its virtual collapse four years earlier. It only survived thanks to a rescue by the Bank of England and the Labour Government which feared the collapse of the country's 10th biggest company might have a disastrous knock-on effect.

The price of its survival was the loss of the majority of its best assets, including a 24 per cent stake in BP, leaving the group as "a smouldering ruin", with businesses as diverse as the Halfords chain, North Sea oilfields and a fleet of 52 oil tankers.

Much of the credit for its transformation into a leading player in the lubricants and performance chemicals market is down to Mr Fry, who recognised that the group's performance would depend on how well it marketed its products. The likes of Castrol GTT's "liquid engineering" campaign were put to good effect.

The main problem the group now faces relates to currency translation, which has knocked 15 per cent from profits compared to a year ago. That, combined with the recent turmoil in Asian markets, has kept the company's share price relatively static for the past year or so, although Mr Fry argues that trading at a local level remains strong and the potential from emerging markets, where most of the investment is going, is good. "We're now making significant money in Russia," he claims.

Mr Fry will be stepping down as chief executive at the Burmah Castrol agm in May to become chairman, there is unlikely to be much let up in his business activities, as he recently became non-executive chairman at Christian Salvesen, the logistics group, and is non-executive deputy chairman at Northern Foods.

Although Mr Fry is unrepentant about his style of management there are signs that "Stir" Fry (a sobriquet earned from his tendency to stir things up) is making an effort to be more restrained. "I'm becoming more respectable, more measured in what I say and less likely to shoot from the hip."



JONATHAN FRY

Born 1937.
Trinity College, Oxford.
1962: McKinsey & Co.
1972: Unigate.
1978: Burmah Oil Trading.
1981: CEO, Burmah Specialty Chemicals.
1988: MD, Castrol.
1990: MD, Burmah Castrol.
1993: CEO, Burmah Castrol; 1998: Chairman, Burmah Castrol.
Non-executive director: Northern Foods, Christian Salvesen, Elements.

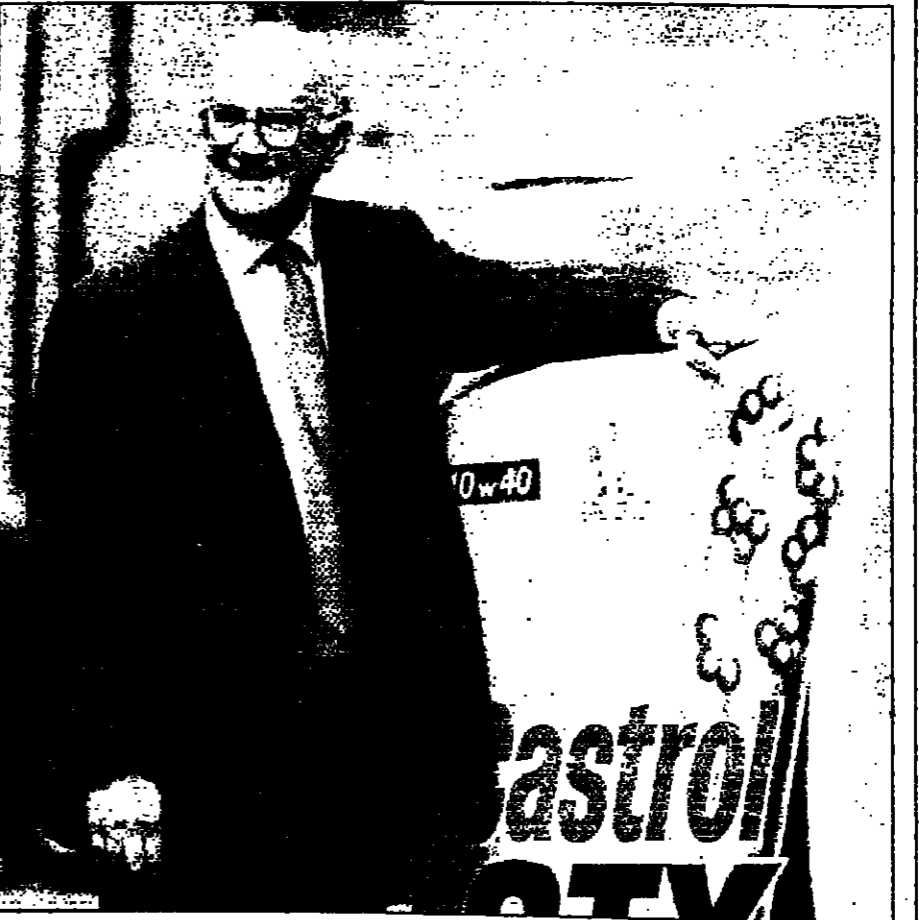
tribute to his sense of humour, a trait recognised by William Samuel, group managing director of corporate finance at Schroders, who has known him for almost 20 years. "He's approachable and amusing, but also a lateral thinker and a bit of an iconoclast really," Mr Samuel said. "He's rather unconventional. He's creative in the best sense of the word."

One of the facets that comes across is his penchant for the outrageous remark, which he sometimes resorts to deliberately to get his point across, although one former colleague said his comments could often upset people. At a recent presentation in the City when he managed to jam the slide projector, Mr Fry told the audience that the technician had "instructed me to treat the projector as gently as one would handle a woman", and there was a huge hiss from people in the audience.

So what are his views of women in the boardroom? "There is a dearth of good candidates, so the good women get stretched and some who are not good enough get there as token women. I have no objection to them, but I would like them to be there solely on merit."

Political correctness is evidently not one of his attributes, though he insists it is all part of his sense of fun. "A sense of the ridiculous in commerce is a healthy thing. It's sometimes a very good thing to get people laughing round the table because then

DOMINIC WALSH



Jonathan Fry has a penchant for the deliberately outrageous remark to make a point

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UNDER THE WEATHER

	1997 peak (p)	Year-end price (p)	% fall
Biocompatibles Intl	1420	492.5	65
British Biotech	270.5	101	62
Cantab Pharmaceuticals	1072.5	605	44
Celltech	671.5	297.5	56
Chiroscience	432.5	221	49
ML Laboratories	244.5	82.5	66
Oxford Molecular	465.28	248	48
Phytopharm	210.5	48	77
PPL Therapeutics	562.5	255	57
Scotia Holdings	735	263.5	64
Stanford Road	638	91.5	86
Xenova	435	155	64

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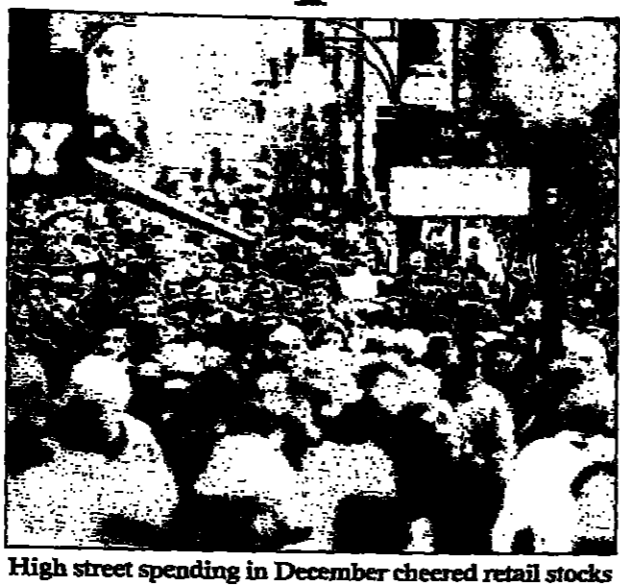
محمد بن لامل

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK Stock Market Writer of the Year

Shares start year buoyant on back of upbeat futures

THE London stock market began 1998 on a high note, with investors hoping this has set the pattern for the remainder of the year.



High street spending in December cheered retail stocks

The FTSE 100 index ended another shortened trading session just below its best of the day, with a rise of 58.0 at 5,193.5.

Much of the early impetus came from the futures pit, where the March series closed with more than a 50-point premium to the cash market.

Another newcomer to the top flight last month was Nycomed, after the merger between Norway's Nycomed and Amersham.

Reports that merger talks between Safeway and rival Asda are finally at an end did little to dampen the speculators' enthusiasm.

The new year started in much the same vein as the old one, with financials making the early running as the speculators selected likely bid targets.

Investors normally worry about a possible interest rate rise every time spending appears to be getting out of control.

ICL advanced 8p to 959p after promising to make further "substantial" disposals as part of its overall restructuring.

Among conventional issues Treasury 8 per cent 2021 finished five ticks better at £121 1/2.

ICL advanced 8p to 959p after promising to make further "substantial" disposals as part of its overall restructuring.

ICL advanced 8p to 959p after promising to make further "substantial" disposals as part of its overall restructuring.

MAJOR INDICES

Table listing major stock indices from New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, Sydney, Frankfurt, Singapore, Brussels, Zurich, London, and Paris.

RECENT ISSUES

Table listing recent stock issues including Abbey Nat Dublin, Autologic, BCO Technologies, and others.

RIGHTS ISSUES

Table listing rights issues for Bdyce Int n/p (500) 407.

MAJOR CHANGES

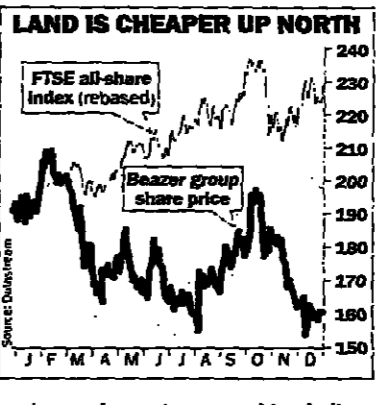
Table listing major stock price changes for companies like Danka Be Sys, RMC Gp, and others.

TEMPUS

Poor performers offer up bargains amid the froth

Last year was a bruising one for most City forecasters but a happy one for investors who ignored the prevailing gloom about bond markets and earnings growth.

Tempus doubts that wobbles in the retail sector, weaker players will suffer, but this company has some of the most powerful brands in the industry.



That should leave sterling firm for at least the first half of the year before any slippage sets in, continuing the new year's domestic manufacturers.

Crashing metals prices and fears of a slowdown in Asia did untold damage to the mining sector but Billiton has been unjustly punished.

Rising employment and real wages, a strong currency and a small price tag, suggest that Tempus should place bets on the service and consumer sectors.

Finally, Tempus wants a speculative flutter on a recovery in Asian markets, including a bit of exposure to Japan.

CARL MORTISHED

Table with columns for COCOA, ROBUSTA COFFEES, WHITE SUGAR, MEAT & LIVESTOCK, and various market data.

Table with columns for CRUDE OILS, PRODUCTS, GAS OIL, BRENT, and various market data.

Table with columns for LONDON METAL EXCHANGE, RUBBER, and various market data.

Table with columns for LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES, Long Gilt, German Govt Bond, and various market data.

Table with columns for MONEY RATES, Base Rates, Prime Bank Bills, and various market data.

Table with columns for DOLLAR RATES, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, and various market data.

Table with columns for OTHER STERLING, Argentina peso, Australia dollar, and various market data.

Table with columns for WALL STREET, AMP Inc, Amgen Corp, and various market data.

NEWS

Straw's shock over drugs case son

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, spoke about the shock and pain of discovering his teenage son had been accused of drug dealing after the Government abandoned its attempts to maintain the gagging order. Mr Straw, one of Tony Blair's closest friends and an implacable opponent of the legalisation of soft drugs, appeared at a press conference... Pages 1, 2

Gales threaten balloon race man

Gales of more than 90mph are expected to cause widespread damage across Britain and could spell doom for the American millionaire hoping to become the first person to circle the globe in a balloon. Solo Spirit, manned by Steve Fossett, was expected to cross the southwest coast of England early today... Page 1

Frank Muir dies

Frank Muir, the comedy writer and broadcaster, whose career in radio and television spanned 50 years, died aged 77... Page 1

TV marriage ends

The marriage between Anthea Turner, the television presenter, and her manager husband Peter Powell has ended... Page 3

Royal skiers

Zara Phillips, daughter of the Princess Royal, took to the slopes of Klosters joining the Prince of Wales and his sons on their annual Swiss skiing holiday... Page 5

Star sign study

The first astrological study of the make-up of the nation's political leaders has suggested a link between star signs and parliamentary success... Page 7

Language difficulty

Universities are prepared for a further slump in applications to study modern languages... Page 10

Oxbridge moves into bicycle peddling

Having spent 900 years establishing a brand name for education, Oxford and Cambridge are to exploit their names. The Cambridge bicycle and Cambridge tea, the latter produced by a graduate on his own plantation, are being launched. Oxford has commissioned a bicycle and launched a whisky... Page 1

Mushroom warning

Collecting of wild mushrooms and fungi is to be restricted amid fears that over-picking is harming woods and wildlife... Page 13

Cutting their cloth

Cuban schoolchildren aged ten to 11 are to be required to wear shorts to save on cloth... Page 17

Mia Farrow silent

Mia Farrow, Woody Allen's lover for 12 years and the mother of his child, is making no public comment on his marriage to her adopted daughter. Soon-Yi... Page 18

Empty glasses

Normally more than 100 customers would be in Eugene Cassidy's Belfast pub. Yesterday just 18 turned up... Page 19

£100,000 appeal

The Times Christmas Appeal for research into prostate cancer has comfortably exceeded its target, raising more than £100,000... Page 20



Walkers on the cobb at Lyme Regis, Dorset, as waves break over the wall where Meryl Streep stood in The French Lieutenant's Woman. Page 1

NEWS FEATURES

Tinsetown: A year after the big studios were being written off as out of touch and incapable of winning Oscars, their executives may be excused a smug "Hooray for Hollywood"... Page 21

Berlin: How the dark heart of the city is now being rehabilitated... Pages 14, 15

Fat and proud: An increasingly assertive and articulate fat liberation movement is gathering pace... Page 11

Hove defiance: The elegant South Coast town is manning the last resistance to hamburger bars... Page 9

OPINION

Straws in the wind: There can be no question of resignation. No parent can wholly control the actions of a 17-year-old. It would be unfair for the sins of the son to be visited upon the father... Page 23

A twitch in time: The British are clearly as entranced by birds as ever - by their beauty, their grace and their serene independence... Page 23

Benefit cuts: The Eucharist: Westminster Council: Gaelic traditions; Nessie; anniversaries; spelling... Page 23

COLUMNS

Matthew Parris: A Valetictory Despatch is the last reporting letter that a British ambassador sends to the Foreign Secretary before retirement. Over the centuries this has become an opportunity to say the things one has always wanted to... Page 22

Chris Bonington: At 800 metres, the South Col of Everest has become the world's highest refuse tip... Page 22

Frank Muir, broadcaster and writer; Helen Willis Moody, tennis champion... Page 25

BUSINESS

Copper: Charles Vincent is being sued by Codeco, a Chilean company that claims to have been cheated out of £107 million... Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 58 to 5193.5. The pound was at 104.5, falling 0.48 cents to \$1.6405 and gaining 0.37 pf to DM2.9595... Page 31

SPORT

Football: Rangers' lead was reduced to a single point by their 1-0 defeat against Celtic... Page 33

Cricket: England must expect a testing tour, but they can compete and, possibly, win... Page 41

Rugby union: Northampton and Bedford, opponents in the Tetley's Bitter Cup, resume a rivalry that began in 1837... Page 38

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Big adventures: Matthew Parris in Bolivia; Ginny Dougary in Harlem; Lisa Grainger in the Kalahari; Jonathan Meades in Buenos Aires; Robert Crampton in Spain; Stephen Brook in Georgia; and Nick Wapshott diving in Mauritius... Pages 6-7

TROTKO

Rhona Mitra, the face of Lara Croft... Page 6
Music: Relive those magical moments... Page 11
Books: The 1997 best-sellers and reviews of the latest issues... Pages 14-23
What's on: 18 pages of films, art, music, clubs, theatre, opera, dance and exhibitions... Pages 26-43

WEEKEND

Will Self: Surviving in a clinic... Pages 1, 3
Worship with snakes in the Appalachians... Page 2
Shopping... Page 4
Home life... Page 6
Country life... Page 7
Faith... Page 15
Travel: Cape Town; Mediterranean; the Galapagos; cruises... Pages 17-28

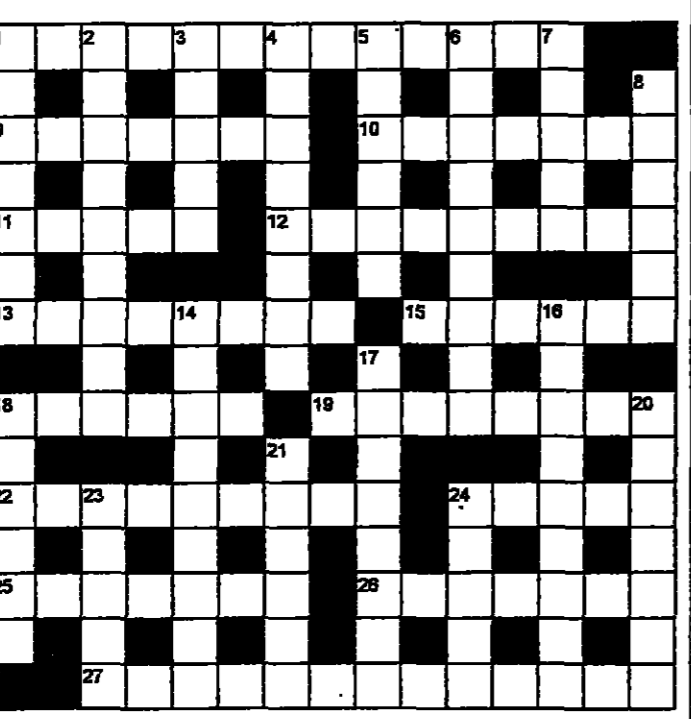
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THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,679

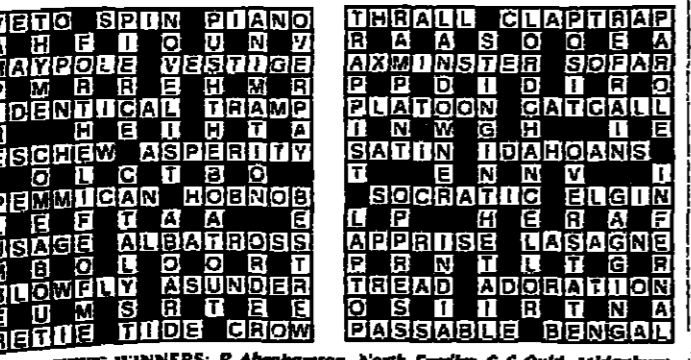
A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS
1 Tetchy guests for fishermen, for instance (6,7).
9 Provided with translation done in Japan, perhaps (7).
10 Last in Tudor English song series put to new use (7).
11 Stain article in colour (5).
12 Not willing to write in the empty ceremonial style (9).
13 They can cope with sledging when they go for runs (3).
15 Monogram for a nonentity (6).
18 Risk one's life, ultimately, in piece of folly (6).
19 Beast about to catch girl - that's not fair (8).
22 Change of Rugby date to do with financial plan (9).
24 Ladder raised to build quickly (3,2).
25 Is a name recalled? Then this isn't complete (7).
26 A direct opposite is never totally different (7).
27 Official recognition of union (3,5).
DOWN
1 Like Cambridge, as opposed to Oxford, blue in boat (7).
2 One who takes his bow before starting to play (9).
3 Attempt to answer fresh questions about what MPs do (5).
4 Fish on the Spey, say, having fellow-director along for the ride (12,5).
5 Strong points of letters in Times editor finally included (6).
6 Assent as concise as it could be (9).
7 Flower you usually can cultivate after collecting all the heads (5).
8 Tack round opponents bidding to finish (6).
14 Pharmacist is parking in more crowded location (9).
16 Irresponsible sort of driver in collision with hare (3-3-3).
17 Fish making the king ill, it's said (5).
18 Feline creature taking short cut around tradesman's entrance (6).
20 Penguin's partner? (7).
21 Endless battle between old sailors for sausage (6).
23 Tough material split in two in sudden impact (5).
24 Celebration both sides hold the night before (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,675



LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: R Abrattansoo, North Ferry; C S Ould, Midlandbury; Southampton; P S Hildrew, Easting; London; A J Davis, Cyncoed; Cardiff; M G Clark, Cromford; East Sussex.

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY
Sun sets: 4:02 pm
Moon sets: 10:15 pm
MORROW
Sun sets: 7:06 pm
Moon sets: 11:14 pm

First quarter January 5
London 4:24 am to 5:24 pm
Bristol 4:18 am to 5:18 pm
Edinburgh 4:12 am to 5:12 pm
Manchester 4:22 am to 5:22 pm
Penzance 4:28 am to 5:28 pm

HIGH TIDES

Table with columns for location, AM, HT, PM, HT. Locations include London, Southampton, Dover, etc.

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest: 16.5°C (London, Dover); Lowest: 10.5°C (London, Dover); Highest rainfall: 0.0mm; Lowest rainfall: 0.0mm; Highest sunshine: 12.0 hours; Lowest sunshine: 0.0 hours.

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FORECAST

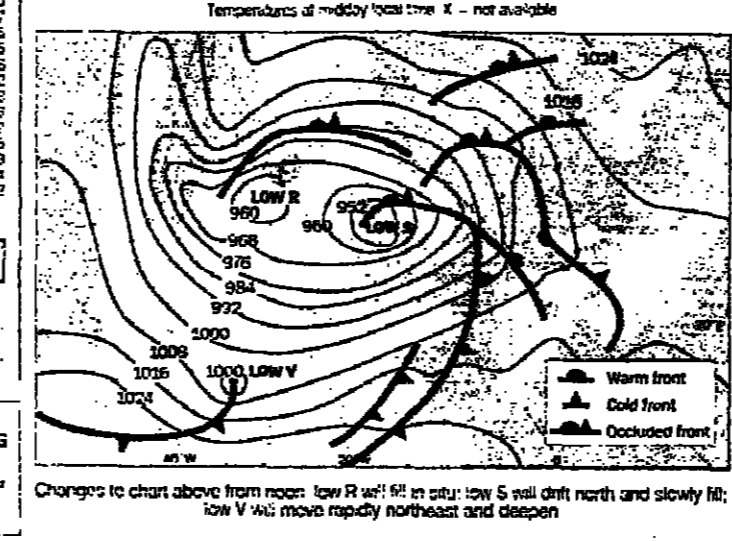
General: A blustery and showery day with strong winds everywhere. Parts of Northern Ireland and western Scotland will suffer storms for a time. Heavy overnight rain will clear southeastern England during the morning to give all parts bright spells and occasional showers. The showers will be heaviest and most frequent in the north and west, with possible thunder and hail. In the east, there will be more sunshine between the showers but even here some of the showers may be heavy. Tonight, the gales in the north will abate but the showers will continue and more rain and high winds will sweep into western parts before morning.
London, SE England, E Anglia, Midlands, E England, Central N, NE England: very windy with heavy rain clearing during the morning to give sunny intervals and blustery showers. A strong to gale-force southwesterly wind. Max temp 10C (50F).
Cent S England, Channel Isles, SW England, Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man: very windy with bright intervals and heavy squally showers, some with hail and thunder. A gale force southwesterly wind. Max temp 9C (48F).
Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland: very windy with rain clearing during the morning to give sunny intervals and blustery showers. A gale force south or southwesterly wind. Max temp 7C (45F).
SW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, Shetland, Northern Ireland: a stormy day with heavy and frequent showers, hail and thunder possible, with the showers turning wintry on hills. A gale to storm-force wind. Max temp 8C (46F).
Republic of Ireland: stormy with squally showers or longer spells of rain. Winds easterly gale or severe gale force, easing later. Feeling cold. Max 9C (48F).
Outlook: rain will move quickly northwards tomorrow, accompanied by gale force winds. Monday will have sunny spells and showers, with showers turning wintry in the north.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

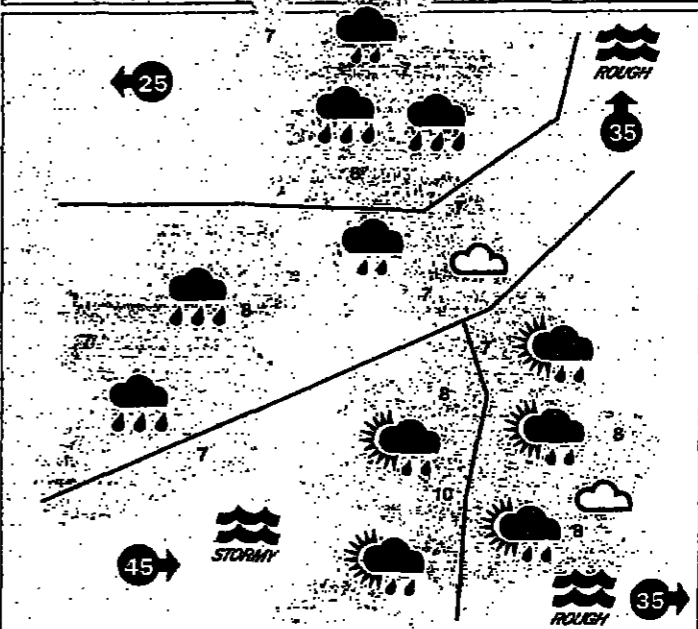
Table showing weather conditions (Sun, Rain, etc.) and temperatures for various locations across Britain.

ABROAD

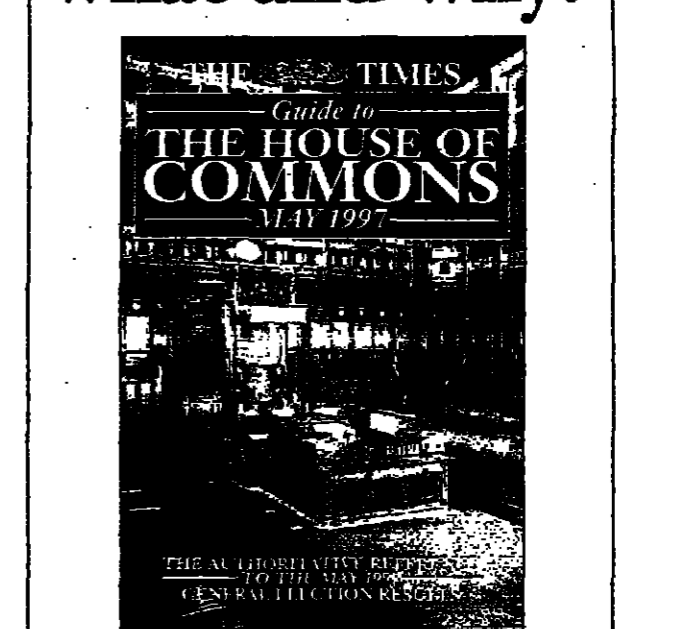
Table showing weather conditions and temperatures for various international locations.



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Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'BLUE IS THE COLOUR', 'Vemb offer treat shar', and 'Football'.

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT

BLUE IS THE COLOUR

Mark Hughes, four times an FA Cup winner, talks to Oliver Holt
PAGE 35

SCORE POINT

What must I do to lose that no-goals reputation
Steve McManaman
PAGE 36

SIMON BARNES

New Year magic in the life of a young horse
PAGE 43

WEEKEND MONEY

Higher bonus rates for some could pay for luxury
PAGE 64

go

Volvo's real life superwoman TV star
PAGE 47

THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

JANUARY 3 1998

NEW YEAR BRINGS THE MAGIC OF THE CUP

Wembley offers dream to share

Rob Hughes enjoys the expectation that unites every football fan on one of the most exciting days of the year

WHERE would sport be without dreamers? For richer and for poorer, for ordinary fan or ennobled follower, the FA Cup third round is a joy money cannot buy. Take two Reginalds: Reg Dean who today travels down with Port Vale to Highbury, where he last supported his team in the Cup 71 years ago, and Reg Dwight, alias Elton John, who is in his second term as Watford chairman.

Apart from cup-tie football, Dean has no illusions. He is the common man who has listened to third-round draws since 1927, waiting and holding on for Arsenal to be paired

more gift that he wants — the scalp of Sheffield Wednesday. Dean and Dwight pay what they can for their Cup dreams, the latter having underwritten millions at Watford and now trying to restore them to what they once were, Cup finalists. His manager, Graham Taylor, is coy about who will line up against Wednesday, but the squad has dreamers too, from the experienced Ronnie Rosenthal to the teenager, Giffon Noel-Williams.

It might be said that professional sides, albeit a couple of divisions apart, are not the full essence of Cup lore over the past 125 years. Emley, de-



FA CUP

Emley's chance	34
Chelsea's task	35
FA Cup form guide	36
Brian Glanville	37

scending from the Pennines for their day at West Ham United, carry the thrill to extremes: firemen and detectives seeking to repeat what non-league Hereford United did to Newcastle.

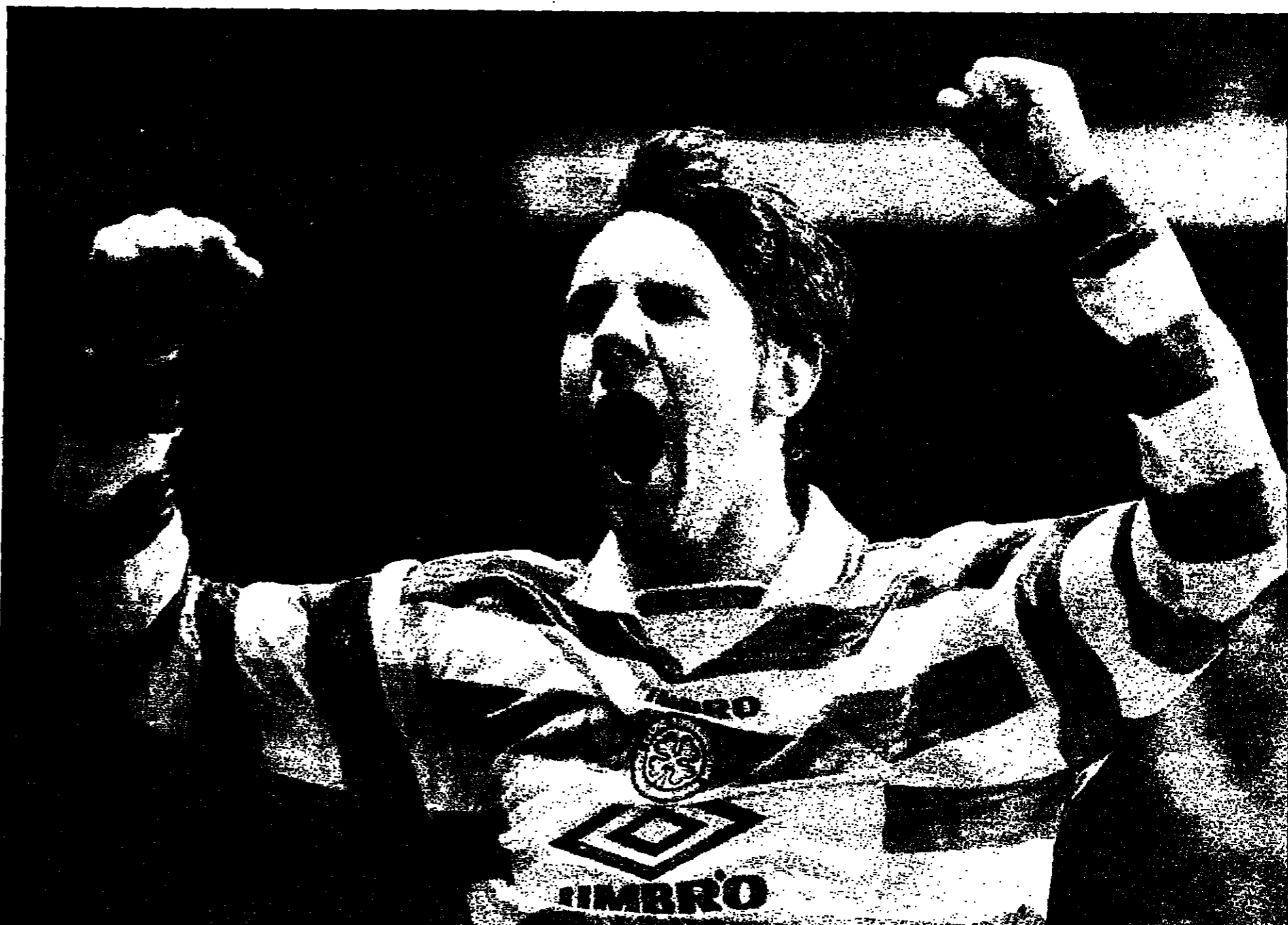
United 27 years ago. The odds are long, and romance usually happens at places less secure than Upton Park.

However, anything can happen in the wind, the lashing rain, the mud, the players scenting liniment, the rest of us smelling the blood of England's giants. Rich men are flying in to witness it. At Ewood Park, Sir Jack Walker spent £50 million to elevate the team and the stadium, and will doubtless arrive by his

own plane from Jersey for Blackburn Rovers against Wigan Athletic, whose chairman, Dave Whelan, is coming by Concorde from his holiday home in Barbados.

Whelan, a sports shop entrepreneur, has mixed emotions. Whelan played for Rovers and last kicked a ball when his leg was broken in the 1960 Cup Final, which Blackburn lost 3-0 to Wolverhampton Wanderers. "It's an absolute dream tie," Whelan said, "the best I could hope for. We'll give them a right good game."

On Saturdays like this, the odds can be overturned by desire. Football's divisions have never been wider, the elite never more privileged or ready to import talents. Yet those players, too, are prey to the irrationality of Cup fever.



Craig Burley celebrates after scoring the opening goal for Celtic yesterday in their 2-0 victory in the Old Firm game. Report, page 37. Photograph: Ian Stewart

come here and handle the situation. But they aren't coming off another planet, and this could be that odd two or three times out of ten."

Scan the third round, and you can almost here the echoes of that Northampton Town go to Leicester City, Oxford United, giant-killers fallen on impoverished times, visit Leeds United while Scunthorpe United meet Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park, where, the following day, Wrexham tackle Wimbledon.

Big pay-days for the lower clubs, but outside hopes of a replay and then the benefits of home comforts for the Premiership set.

Portsmouth, whose various Jamaicans and Australians are almost strangers, so often are they absent on World Cup

duty, seek harmony against Aston Villa, whose multi-million-pound flu victims are all suddenly up for the Cup. And what price Darlington knocking out Wolves and making that other grand benefactor, Sir Jack Hayward, repeat his lament that he may die before his club returns to Wembley?

Finally, delayed until Monday, the House of Intrigue versus the House of Harrods. Tottenham Hotspur's chief shareholder, Alan Sugar, has rushed back from Florida, not just because the Cup beckons, but to try to instil unity in his rival club. Mohamed Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods trying to buy the best for Fulham, must fancy that a bonus so early in his sporting takeover is on the cards.

As for the famous chaps in the sport, Alex Ferguson should obviously stop larking about in front of the cameras. (It's getting embarrassing.) Emerson should stop pretending he doesn't like Middlesbrough, because nobody believes him, it's a super place, and if Rio de Janeiro has more to offer, I'd like to see what it is. Ian Walker should undertake an immediate Complan diet. Michael Owen should stop showing off. (Ditto John Hartson) And Alan Shearer? Remember him? What should Alan Shearer's new year resolution be? Well, he should certainly decline the offer of any skiing holidays. At least until after July.

Football clubs might also consider installing underfloor heating for the comfort of

Football over the moon with festive pledges

Players missing the point with their new year resolutions

Now, Gary Mabbutt is a chap you'd like to know. Recently, various Spurs players were asked for their new year resolutions... and what did they say? "To stay fit", "To score more goals". Easy to see how the back-of-the-net-Brian image of football continues to thrive in these media-babble times. No one expects raptier wit from footballers, but they can surely afford to hire writers for special occasions. Compare their average sock-and-hankie bill with the (surprisingly modest) daily rate for A. S. Byatt's services, and I think we'll see what a peculiar world of intellectual values we are living in. But to return to Gary Mabbutt. "To continue the

LYNNE TRUSS

fight for wildlife conservation." was his resolution. Gulp. Asked: "What moment in 1997 would you most like to forget?" he did not plump straight for "Chelsea", either. (All the others did.) Instead, he said: "When our cat Simba passed away at the young age of two." Now, either Mabbutt's wife secretly filled in the questionnaire when he was out, or a new, softer era has dawned, in which football isn't everything. Mabbutt couldn't even bring himself to say "died", you notice. Poor little Simba. Gary, I know you must be an awfully nice man to say that. Q: Ian Wright, what is your new year resolution? A: To learn to cherish my



Ferdinand: seasonal wish to rediscover best form

inner child. Q: Roy Keane, what is your new year resolution? A: (No reply.) Q: Emerson? A: (Silence.) That's very odd. There's nobody there. What is a resolution? It's a rather flimsy promise to alter an area of your life — and it

presupposes that this area is one you normally can't control. Thus, "Clear newspapers once a week, before they reach waist height". "Train cats not to sit on face". "Be kinder to idiot workmen". These footballers promising to "score more goals" or "stay fit" have clearly missed the point. Big Les Ferdinand may resolve to "recover previous form", and this fond intention may be music to the ears of glum team-mates. But it's very odd that it's his new year resolution. Doesn't Les Ferdinand wake up every day of the year to shout: "Where, oh where, is my previous form? And how, oh how, can I retrieve it?" There are obvious resolutions football itself should make. It should change its diet of pies and burgers for a start. The soup-and-baguette People's Self-Esteem Revolt is taking far too long to bubble up. Football clubs might also consider installing underfloor heating for the comfort of

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FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Emley need Marples to be spot on

Richard Hobson meets the former Derbyshire wicketkeeper relishing the prospect of facing West Ham United today

Chris Marples thought that his days under the spotlight were over...

aftermath of the second-round win against Lincoln City, described him as an unemployed gardener.

Scotland and Barnsley midfield player who now manages Emley, invited him to the club in September 1996.



Marples, centre, is chaired off after the match with Lincoln

Three years ago Marples broke his left leg in two places when he collided with Stuart Young in a humdrum league match between Chesterfield and Scunthorpe United.

He has undergone much soul-searching since giving up the professional game 18 months ago, with fleeing regrets but never self-pity.

He went on to play for Stockport County and York City before returning to Chesterfield, making nearly 400 appearances in all.

It has taken Emley eight games to come this far, including replays in the first round proper, against Morecambe, and the next stage versus Lincoln City.

The Cup campaign began on September 13 with a first qualifying round tie at Workington. The cricket season was still in progress.

For Emley to take West Ham even that far would be an achievement of seismic proportions. "Our attitude is that we won the Cup when we beat Lincoln, and now we are going into Europe," Marples said.

OF THE four non-League clubs bringing valuable colour to the FA Cup weekend, Cheltenham Town are the kind of form horse that would delight those who flock to a fabled venue that lies a short gallop from Whaddon Road.

second time — the first a distant encounter with Blackpool in 1934 after beating Tiverton Town and Boreham Wood in the previous rounds.

The weight of Hereford United's tradition as cup-fighters will give Tranmere Rovers similar cause for concern as they go to Edgar Street.

Andrew's, a two-week spell of cold weather had allowed respite and decent time to prepare. Swindon are riding a stronger wave of form than Birmingham were last year.

motivation and the experience of last year will enable the older heads in the dressing-room to warn their team-mates of what lies in store.

themselves against the buffeting that lie in wait. Think of previous sides from outside the Conference playing top-flight sides and search the lists to see where they are now.

Cheltenham offer value for the sentimental

Misconduct charge for O'Neill

MARTIN O'NEILL, the Leicester City manager, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after an alleged confrontation with Jeff Wither, the referee, at the end of Leicester's 1-0 defeat at home to Everton a fortnight ago.

Steve Lomas, the Northern Ireland and West Ham United midfielder player, has also been charged with misconduct after appearing to grab Gerald Ashby, the referee, during West Ham's game against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on December 21.



Gascoigne was unable to turn the tide for Rangers after coming on as a substitute. Photograph: Stu Forster

New year, new fear for Hoddle

Oliver Holt says Paul Gascoigne's return may cause concern for the England coach

IT IS difficult to read too much into an 18-minute cameo, but the brief fret that Paul Gascoigne made across a hostile stage in Glasgow yesterday afternoon sent out another warning sign to Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, as he and the country gear themselves for a momentous year ahead and the challenge of the World Cup finals this summer.

In the little time he had in an uneven but ultimately uproarious Old Firm match at Celtic Park, Gascoigne, playing for the first time since the end of a five-game suspension, dipped into his bag of tricks but was unable to swing the game back the way of his Rangers team, who lost this traditional new year fixture for the first time in a decade.

Gascoigne's return to international excellence has been synonymous with his happiness at the heart of a dominant Rangers team. That dominance appears to be coming to an end and this result, Gascoigne's first experience of defeat in an Old Firm league game, which cut Rangers' lead at the top of the Bell's Scottish League premier division to one point over Celtic and Heart of Midlothian, seems to presage the waning of the hegemony of Walter Smith's side after nine consecutive titles.

If that happens and Gascoigne suddenly finds himself pitched into an unholly battle to try to stop decay setting in, the fear for Hoddle and England will be that the relative serenity that has settled upon him in recent months will disappear amid the mêlée and that more disciplinary problems will disrupt his preparations for the World Cup.

pressing for inclusion in the squad — players such as Paul Scholes, Robbie Heskey, Steve McManis and Michael Owen — have gone from strength to strength, whereas a group of senior players seem to be falling by the wayside.

For the first 70 minutes he did little else than pace the touchline, stamping a few divots back into the turf, limbering up with his fellow substitute, Gordon Durie, and taking time to berate the referee's assistant for some eccentric decisions.

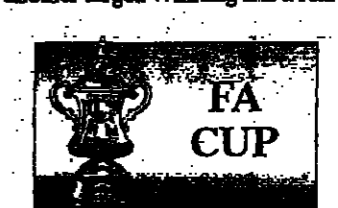
Match report, page 37

Draw offers cruel twist of fate for Premiership also-rans

WITH just the merest flash of grey clouding his perennially sunny features, Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager, betrayed his feelings on the draw for the third round of the FA Cup.

Five ties — including one at Oakwell that pits Barnsley against fellow strugglers Bolton Wanderers — will be disputed by FA Carling Premiership clubs, adding another degree of difficulty to a round that, traditionally, generates most expectation and romance.

With Manchester United, who play Chelsea tomorrow, setting the pace in the league, the Cup, in January, remains a viable objective — and perhaps, also, a lifeline for every top-flight manager.



success, and there are plenty of managers around who would settle for that.

Evans, perhaps, is one of them. Should his side finish second to United in the league, and lift the FA Cup, then justice would demand that he be given at least another year in the hot seat at Anfield.

A Cup success also would ease the growing pressure on Kenny Dalglish, the Newcastle United manager. His side is languishing in the middle of the Premiership, and visit Everton tomorrow.

Although Darren Peacock returns from injury, and Alan Shearer may be back in time for the next round, Newcastle will be without Philippe Albert and David Batty, both suspended.

Everton defeated Newcastle on the way to their FA Cup triumph in 1995, and Andy Hinchcliffe, the only man likely to play tomorrow who started at Wembley that day, said: "This season is shaping up like 1995. We had a bad start then, but the Cup helped us get out of trouble in the end. Things are beginning to turn around."

WALTER GAMMIE DAVID MADDOCK

حكايا من الأهل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Hughes finds true-blue identity

Once a favourite at Old Trafford, the Wales striker has enjoyed a welcome and deserved revival on an imposing West London stage

I have an interest to declare in the well-chronicled story of the career of Mark Hughes. I took a T-shirt with me to the Chelsea training ground this week on the day that the news of his MBE leaked out and, after we had finished speaking upstairs in the canteen, I fished it out of my briefcase with a few muttered apologies and asked him if he would sign it.

The white cotton had faded with the years and grown threadbare, but the image was

remember him habitually puffing his chest out like a pigeon, too, usually after he had been involved in some haughty exchange with a defender.

Now, though, seems to be the right time for the T-shirt to be retired. A decent period has elapsed since Hughes left Manchester and, just as John Barnes and Ian Rush are beginning to do on Tyneside, he has established a new identity for himself, a presence in Chelsea blue, not United red.

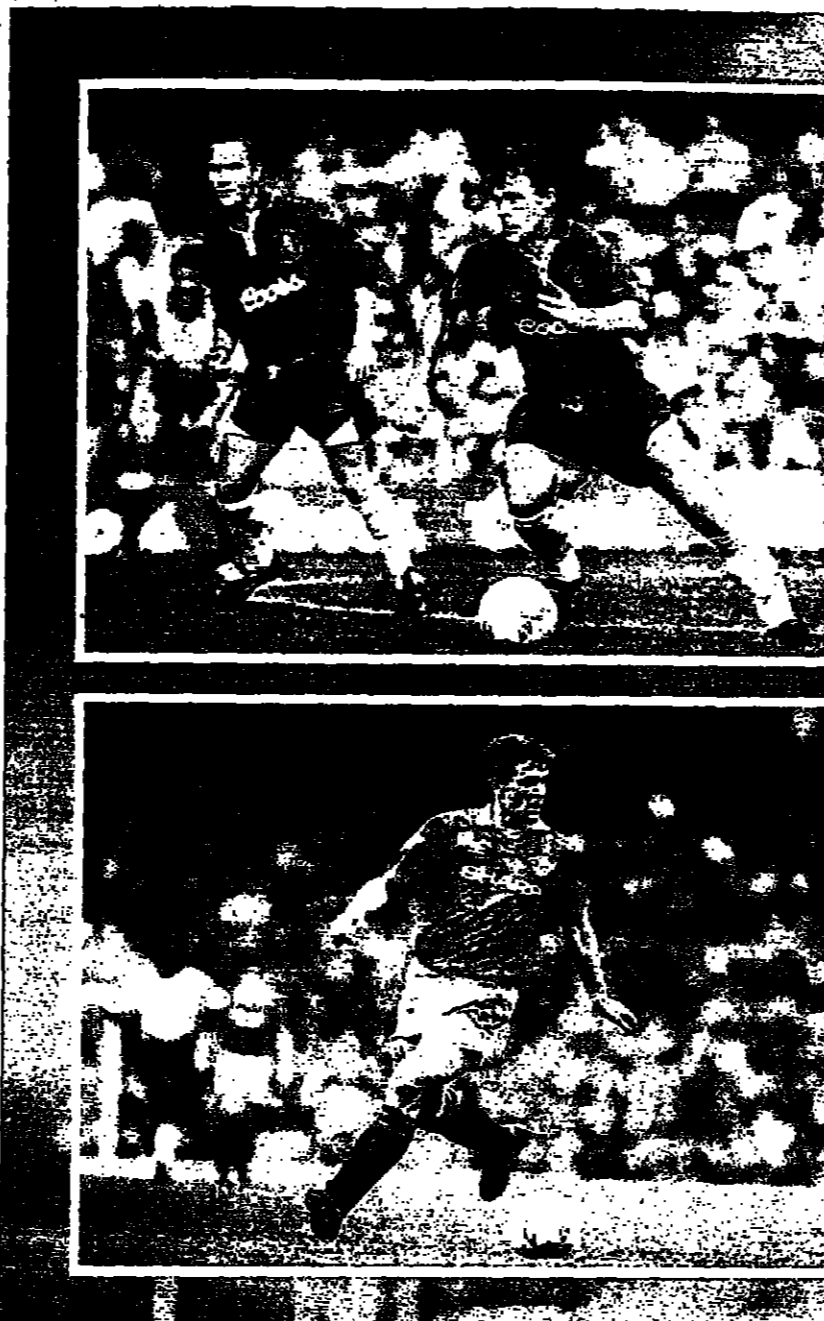
His appearance in the Chelsea line-up at Stamford Bridge tomorrow — if the capriciousness of Ruud Gullit allows it — in the pick of the FA Cup third-round ties, the holders against the favourites, will be another rite of passage, another piece of the process of distancing from his former team as he begins his attempt to win what would be a record fifth winners' medal in the competition.

There are still those at United who mourn the passing of the softly spoken Wales striker who puts his family first in all things, but he has aged and matured as gracefully and effectively as any modern footballer. Now that two years have elapsed since he left and Stretford hordes with the precocity of Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and Gary Neville, it seems right and proper that Hughes, 34, is flourishing in a different environment.

For those who expect divided loyalties from him tomorrow, there will be none. His allegiance is to Chelsea. There will be an added desire to win, in fact, to put one over on his old club, to reward the West London supporters who made him their player of the year last season after he led their scoring with 14 goals, to assure them that he is true Blue, committed to raising Chelsea to the level that he helped United to attain.

Equally, though, Hughes will not be firing any cheap shots at his old club, falling into line with the legions of players who take their silver pieces from newspapers when a club sells them, take a few cheap shots at their former team-mates and manager, and, at a stroke, cheapen the loyalty shown to them by the supporters over the years.

Hughes's feelings run deeper than that. When he left for Chelsea in the summer of 1995, convinced that Eric Cantona and Andy Cole were the chosen strike pair for the season ahead, he agonised over his decision. "At that stage," Hughes said, "I was 31 and I thought I had a lot more



Although now an inspiring figure for Chelsea, top, the memory of Hughes's formidable presence as the focal point for the Manchester United attack remains vivid



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: DES JENSON; INSET TOP: JULIAN HERBERT

OLIVER HOLT



still clear. It was a picture that is about as close to the epitome of unrestrained joy as it is possible to get, a still shot of a man running towards the camera, his head tilted back so that his face is pointing at the night skies, his mouth open, shouting out his happiness, his hands outstretched by his sides celebrating a goal.

I stretched the cotton taut on the surface of the trestle-table and gave him a gold marker pen so that he could scrawl a message across his picture. He wrote his best wishes and signed his autograph and I asked him to put the date on it, too. December 1997, more than 12 years after the photograph was taken. I was leaping about in the Kippax at that moment and United were in the process of edging past Liverpool in an FA Cup semi-final replay at Maine Road.

I remember other things about those years in the mid-Eighties, too, before distance and the years diluted my allegiances. I remember standing on a packed away terrace at the Manor Ground, seeing what I have preserved in my memory, at least, as Hughes's first goal for United, an unstoppable back-post header against Oxford United. I think it was a 1-1 draw. I

to offer than just sitting on the bench. Some players can do it. I can't. I wouldn't have been able to do it, not at Manchester United, because my pride wouldn't have been able to take it.

It was a big thing for me to decide. I remember when I was on holiday and I had made the decision and I had to tell my eldest son, Alex. I said: "How would you feel if I wasn't playing for United and I signed for Chelsea? And he said 'it's OK' and then he walked off with tears in his eyes. He was eight. It was a difficult time, but I had a lot of support from my wife and the kids and without that I would not have been able to get away with it."

"One of the other things I took into account was that if I hung around in the reserves and sitting on the bench, I was stopping the progression of other players there, players

like Paul Scholes, in particular, and he deserved a chance. I had had ten wonderful years there and maybe it was time for somebody else to have a go. That had some bearing on my decision. I saw them coming through and everybody knew they were a little bit special. Now, they are marvellous to watch.

"I still have a special feeling about United. Most Chelsea fans would love me to come out and say I have got no feelings for them or I don't like United any more, but deep down they know I would never say that because I had some great times there. The times here are as good because I have come here at a stage of my career when a lot of people thought that from United I would go down, but I have come to a club that is trying to get to the same level and it has been a perfect move for me."

"The thing with United is I would never burn any bridges with them. A lot of players

leave United and say things in the paper and make a few quid. People came to me and wanted me to criticise the club and criticise the manager, but I would never do that. I want to be able to walk into Old Trafford when I am 40 or 45 with my kids and take them to a match and be made to feel welcome. I would never jeopardise that and I would not do that at Chelsea, either."

Chelsea have been good for Hughes, too. The club has given his career an Indian summer, kept him motivated and in the spotlight. Like all the best players, he is still learning. Gullit told him to stop wasting all his energy chasing full backs and it was like a revelation to him. "I thought, 'Well, for about 14 years, I've been doing it wrong'. I realised I had so much extra energy. I can play more on defenders' shoulders now because I have got so much more energy."

In the two years that he has

been at Chelsea, they have matured from perennial also-rans to main challengers for United's crown, one of the truly big clubs with a fine ground and a stock of international players of such high quality that Gullit can afford to juggle the forwards almost every week. Even this rotation with Tore Andre Flo, Gianluca Vialli and Gianfranco Zola, Hughes seems ready to accept.

"Each of us feels we should be playing week-in-week-out and that we are capable of doing that, but if you don't play one week, you know you have got a good chance of playing the next week and if you don't play the next game, you are guaranteed to play the one after that. The only time when players become restless and not happy with their lot is when they are out of the side and they can see no time in the near future when they are going to get a game. That is when you get a bit disruptive."

There seems to be no danger of that in Hughes, whose wish now is to help Chelsea to jump the final hurdle towards being champions, not challengers. He knows that the match tomorrow will provide one of the most important steps in their education.

"United are a good side," Hughes said, "and they have got into the habit of winning. Maybe that is what we have not got. It has taken them a long time to get that habit but it is a good one to have."

Sometimes we let ourselves down here, because we do not push ourselves that extra yard that makes the difference. With United it is the fear of failure, because they know what kind of reaction it causes when they lose and they don't like that because people take great joy in them getting beaten.

"People should not mistake my affection for United and my admiration for them for thinking that maybe I don't try as hard because I want United to win. Nothing could be further from the truth. I would love to beat them in the Cup and everybody knows that. I want to do well against them because I want to do well for Chelsea Football Club. I try to play well in every game, but the mind is a strange thing and maybe something extra clicks in when you play against them. You always like to judge yourself against the highest standards and that is what United are."

Supporting cast weakens Chelsea's cause

Oliver Holt compares the sides that meet at Stamford Bridge

THE omens have not been good for Chelsea. A draw with a nine-man Leeds United side, another two points lost at home to a modest Wimbledon team and then defeat against Southampton at The Dell on Monday have cast doubts over their ability to mount a lasting challenge to the hegemony of Manchester United in the run-up to their FA Cup meeting at Stamford Bridge tomorrow.

Even though the game, the pick of the third-round ties, falls outside the realms of the FA Cup Premier-ship, it will still provide another opportunity to compare the sides that have come to be regarded as the leading teams in the country, the two that are expected to be fighting for the title in May.

Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea player-manager, has attempted to create a richness, a depth, in his squad that rivals that of United. But while Alex Ferguson seems to have achieved what he wants at Old Trafford, to have reached a point where his team runs like a well-oiled machine, with

new components fitted as and when they are needed without disturbing the collective rhythm, there is a sense that Gullit is still reaching for what he wants, still giving his youngsters the experience they need where United's crop have already gained theirs.

Gullit is getting there and he is doing it quickly, but although he never complains about injuries and suspensions, Chelsea have had their fair share of both this season and, patently, they have suffered for it. Their first XI might almost be a match for Manchester United, man-for-man, but when they look to the supporting cast, as they will have to do tomorrow, they can be found wanting.

Brighton appeal for cash donation

By Russell Kempson

THE Goldstone Ground, former home of Brighton, the Nationwide League third division club, has changed hands for more than three times the amount it was sold for two years ago. Chartwell Land bought it from Brighton for £7.4 million, allowing the club to clear its debts, but Abbey Life Fund Management has now paid £24 million for what will soon become a retail park.

Ivor Caplin, MP for Hove, has suggested that Brighton should receive a donation from the profit — about £12 million, after costs — on the sale made by Chartwell. Caplin said: "We are desperately trying to relocate the club back to the area, with very little money available, and I'm calling on Chartwell to make a donation to the current board of £1 million towards this relocation. It is the least they could do as a token of goodwill."

Simon Hawley, fund manager for Abbey Life, said yesterday: "We believe we have paid a fair price. It is the market price for that sort of commodity. Chartwell had to do a lot of demolition and construction work." Since leaving the Goldstone Ground, Brighton has shared the Priestfield Stadium with Gillingham in Kent. They hope to move back to Brighton, at the council-owned Withdean Stadium, on a temporary basis in time for the start of next season. Manchester United have refused to back down in their

dispute with supporters who stand up in the seated areas during matches at Old Trafford. Some fans have complained about the alleged heavy-handed tactics of stewards and security staff. Ken Merritt, the United secretary, said: "Trafford Council have told us that we risk having our capacity reduced if supporters do not remain seated for the main part of the game. We have advised supporters, and we've taken a very relaxed attitude as far as we can, but drastic measures are now called for. What people are forgetting is that this is for the benefit of the large number of supporters who do not wish to stand and are having their enjoyment affected by those who do."



DEFENCE

THE key to this area, and to the match, could be Peter Schmeichel. With the Dane sidelined for two matches with a back injury, United's back four, usually so rigid and unbreakable, have looked less comfortable playing in front of Kevin Pilkington, the third-string goalkeeper.

Although Ferguson has been blasé about whether or not Schmeichel plays, he will use him if he has half a chance and that would give United the edge in this department.

Gary Pallister has been in majestic form in the centre of defence, alongside either Henning Berg or Ronnie Henry, and at right back Gary Neville has been solid in his own half and prodigious in his supply of curling crosses at the opponents' end. At left back, United are likely to be buoyed by the return of Denis Irwin, back after the knee injury occasioned by Paul Boswell's tackle on him in Rotterdam.

Chelsea do not look as formidable in this department, even though their central-defensive partnership of Michael Duberry and the fit-again Frank Leboeuf is a fine combination of power and elegance, and at left back they have the rampaging Graeme Le Saux, a match for any player in that position in the country.

Their weakness is in goal, where Ed de Goey, victim of the continental disease of punching when he could catch and too often too tentative, still has much to prove. Right back has been a problem position, too, after some indifferent performances from Frank Sinclair. He is not available tomorrow, so Steve Clarke, a sturdy defender but not as useful as Gary Neville going forward, is likely to fill in.



Pallister: majestic

MIDFIELD

UNITED'S trump card and Chelsea's Achilles' heel. With Paul Scholes back in the centre, David Beckham and Ryan Giggs functioning at the very top of their form and Nicky Butt and Johnsen competing for the fourth place, United's midfield is unquestionably the best in the Premiership.

After a brief period of substitution at the end of last season, Beckham is growing in stature with every game, his range of passing ever-more impressive, his crossing improving, his free kicks getting back to their deadliness. Giggs's speed is frightening and the winger is likely to stretch Clarke to his limit.

Chelsea would have needed to be at their strongest to cope with that quartet, but instead they will be without the suspended Dennis Wise, the man who has undoubtedly been their best player this season and who would have provided the steel and the aggression to nullify some of United's threat.

Roberto Di Matteo will play more centrally now, but after the long-term injury to Gustavo Poyet and the unavailability of Celestine Babayaro, he is bound to be partnered by one of Chelsea's own breed of emerging talents, probably Paul Hughes or Mark Nicholls, fine young players but ones who are not yet as accomplished as their United counterparts.

Gullit may spring a surprise by playing himself or using Gianfranco Zola in an advanced, left-sided midfield position that would restrict the raids of Neville, but United will still have the upper hand in this department.



Di Matteo: central role

ATTACK

THE only area in which Chelsea have parity. They have kept up with Manchester United's frenetic goalscoring pace this season and have juggled any two from Zola, Tore Andre Flo, Gianluca Vialli and Mark Hughes.

It is a novel approach that seems to have worked, but the rotational system has stopped any of the forwards establishing a rapport on the same level as that forged by Andy Cole and Teddy Sheringham at Old Trafford.

That pairing has been so successful, so explosive, that it has effectively frozen Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, the Norwegian, out of the attack and removed the last obstacle to United's dominance by instilling in Cole the restored confidence and the poise to become a prolific goalscorer once more. He has managed 16 goals this season in all competitions, 14 of them in his past 15 appearances.

Chelsea's ace here may be the presence of Mark Hughes, if Gullit chooses to play him against his old club. Suspension and Gullit's squad system have limited his chances, so his desire to shine will be all the greater.

Hughes believes that his side can eliminate the favourites. "Come Sunday," he said, "it might suit us better against United because just lately the teams have been coming to the Bridge and shutting up shop."

"They have been coming for draws and they have made it difficult for us. But United will always attack you, not willy-nilly, but the game will be more open. It should be a thriller."



Cole: poise

PREDICTION: On paper, it has to be United, even if their recent irresistible run came to an end away to Coventry City last Sunday. If Schmeichel plays, they will be even harder to beat. If he does not, the passion and the atmosphere will give Chelsea a fighting chance. This one will go to a replay.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Title hopefuls must learn mind games of championship chase

And so to 1998. With the break for the FA Cup third round this weekend, we have a chance to look back at the league programme and assess how the season is going so far.

It is interesting that already the league appears to have come down to a situation where other clubs are being asked to respond to Manchester United. I noticed that when they actually faltered last weekend, only Liverpool pulled off a win of all their challengers.

But I would like to think that at Liverpool we have been there before. We didn't play as consistently in the run-in to the championship last season as we would have liked, but I said back then that the most important thing was to learn from the experience.



McMANAMAN'S WORLD

gap is still a large one, and United are in a very strong position, but we still feel that we are capable of catching them. What we must realise, and every other team at the top must grasp, is that no side will go through the rest of the season unbeaten. I know it is almost becoming a cliché, but the Premiership is so competitive now that every team is capable of taking points off every other team, from the top right to the bottom.

going back to these stereotypes, even when they are clearly not true. Take David James. I really feel sorry for him at the moment, because never can a player have been so unfairly labelled. I can state without contradiction that David is the best goalkeeper playing in the Premiership at the moment. Peter Schmeichel is injured and David's form is head and shoulders above the rest. He has been absolutely outstanding.

He has kept six clean sheets from ten matches and led in fewer goals than any of his rivals. And yet I read one newspaper only last week that, after the arrival of Brad Friedel, linked him with Sheffield Wednesday. The headline on the story described him as a 'calamity keeper'.

STEVE McMANAMAN

SEARCHING FOR SHOCKS ON THE ROAD TO WEMBLEY

CERTAINTIES

Arsenal v Port Vale (today, 3pm): Gunners firing blanks of late but, even without Wright, still too strong for Vale. Blackburn Rovers v Wigan Athletic (today, 3pm): If it was rugby league, Wigan might have a chance. With the round ball, not a hope.

TOO CLOSE TO CALL

Barnsley v Bolton Wanderers (today, 3pm): Barnsley on the crest of a wave, but matches uncertain. Bristol Rovers v Ipswich Town (today, 3pm): Pirates to plunder prize if Ipswich reproduce dismal early-season form.

UPSETS

Bournemouth v Huddersfield Town (today, 3pm): Terriers have snapped a bit more since Brian Horton left but Cherries to finish on top.

UPSETS

Hereford United v Tranmere Rovers (tomorrow, 12 noon): Cup glory returns to Edgar Street. Rovers ravaged and that's no bull. Portsmouth v Aston Villa (today, 3pm): Pompey raise game to vanquish Villa. 'El Tri' takes all the credit.

WEEKEND MATCHES

Table listing weekend matches including Arsenal v Port Vale, Blackburn Rovers v Wigan Athletic, and various other league fixtures.

FA CUP THIRD-ROUND FORM GUIDE

Table with columns for 'FIRST IMPRESSIONS', 'CLOSE ENCOUNTERS', 'GIANTKILLING', 'UNBEATEN SO FAR', and 'ALL-PREMIERSHIP MATCHES'.



Bobby ball: Bournemouth celebrate beating Man United in 1984

I'LL GET ME COAT The strength of the sea is on the FA Cup and be served, tested by Manchester United tomorrow. As a warning to the Red boys here are 11 teams that failed at the first sentence of the trophy.

1. Arsenal (1994) Andy Linde's leader won the Cup in 1993 but losing a 'risky' bet the next season was masterminded by Bolton Wanderers - and a manager called Raich.

TELEVISION: Today, BBC1: Football Focus, from 12.20pm. Match of the Day (featuring Watford v Sheffield Wednesday), from 1.30pm.

Statistics compiled by Julian Desborough

Celtic fresh ca... Celtic p... fresh ca... ble cha... (Large vertical advertisement on the right edge)

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Celtic present fresh case for title challenge

Celtic 2
Rangers 0

By Kevin McCarr

SCARCITY equalled ecstasy. A rare victory over Rangers for far more than its worth in cutting the Ibrox side's lead in the Bell's Scottish League premier division to a single point.

Wim Jansen's team were wrestling to win credibility after failing to beat their rivals in any of the previous ten league meetings.

Celtic had not only a set of statistics to mend. Here, after so many disappointments, they were to prove themselves superior to Rangers when the contest was at its most taxing.

Burley and Lambert, the scorers, are two members of a midfield who had led a miserable life against Rangers in the two earlier games of the season. The pair took full

advantage yesterday of circumstances that had relented on them. Gascoigne, an established tormentor of Celtic, had lost match fitness and acquired a little weight while suspended and appeared merely as a late substitute.

By that stage, Celtic were not to be toppled. When playing Rangers at home, they have often been prone to a headlong rush at the outset that eventually gives way to a disjointed performance. Here, the team had fixed in its mind the full extent of a game and were painstaking and obstinate as they picked their way through to success.

Celtic did not have a noteworthy attack until late in the first half, but once they had achieved control, they made a series of chances that forced Goram to a batch of good saves. Rangers should probably have been awarded a penalty, in the sixth minute, when Stubbs's challenge caught Laudrup, but the losers are not inclined to gripe. They hardly required Gould, the Celtic goalkeeper, to muddy his knees, let alone block a significant shot.

Praise of the victors ought to be checked by the knowledge that it is only a week since they were deservedly beaten by St Johnstone. Nonetheless, they will make a vigorous challenge for the title if the strengths flaunted in this game do not diminish in the months ahead.

The central defenders were unyielding in nullifying the prolific Negri, while Laudrup, so often devastating, suffered from a double dose of adversity. His colleagues could only provide him with an awkward sort of possession and the Dane had to try and capitalise on it while harassed by Annoni, a marker tutored in the severe environs of Serie A.

Unusually, Rangers found that their plans were flawed. Gattuso, fielded as a wing back, was disorientated and the strength of Boyd's running on Celtic's left flank prevented the opposition from attaining balance. Most of all, Rangers were overcome because, eventually, their midfield was fully extended by the attempt to contain Celtic and, for its own part, generated humdrum attacks.



Laudrup evades the sliding challenge of Lambert, a Celtic goalscorer, in the Old Firm game yesterday

The opening to the match had been as misleading as a confidence trick. Then, it was Rangers who were capable of thinking of worthwhile uses for the ball. Only Celtic's command of their own penalty area ensured that there were

no tangible rewards. After 40 minutes, Laudrup twice stepped away from Annoni and slid a cross along the edge of the six-yard box; twice, the ball passed just beyond Negri's outstretched leg. However, Celtic had begun

by then to sense their own powers. In the 38th minute, Lambert's pass had sent Brantbakk through, but his shot was not quite good enough to beat the splendid Goram. Even so, the omens were already being read.

"We have no complaints," Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, said. "The signs were there at the interval." Sure enough, in the second half, Celtic had as much command as they required. Goram pawed a Stubbs head-

TABLE

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	20	12	4	4	31	12	42
Celtic	20	13	2	5	36	12	41
St Johnstone	19	12	2	5	26	16	38
Kilmarnock	19	11	2	6	28	16	35
Dundee United	19	6	6	7	22	30	24
St Mirren	19	6	6	7	22	29	23
Dunfermline	19	5	6	8	22	27	21
Aberdeen	19	5	4	10	22	32	19
Inverness	19	3	6	10	22	32	16
Hibernian	20	1	6	13	22	32	12

er away from the top corner and later parried a shot by Brantbakk, who was starting his first match for Celtic. The ball rolled to Boyd and his cross was volleyed by Larsson against first a post and then the back of Cleland. Celtic were making their way towards a first victory in ten years in the new year edition of this derby.

After 67 minutes, McNamara drove in from the right, working his way beyond them before flicking a deft pass to Burley. He steadied himself and placed a low shot past Goram's right hand.

Four minutes from the end, Stubbs strode forward and Rangers seemed to part in front of him. Though that chance passed, Goram's defence was dishevelled as it tried to clear the danger and finally, from 25 yards, Lambert smashed the loose ball high into the net. The explosion of the shot breached the dam of frustration that had been built up over recent years against Rangers, releasing joy that flooded Celtic Park.

CELTIC (3-4-3): J. Gould - G. Peck - A. Stubbs, E. Aronson - J. McGuffee, P. Dunlop, C. Boyd, D. Stewart, T. Boyd - W. Lambert, H. Burley, J. McGuffee, S. Boyd. RANGERS (3-5-2): A. Goram - S. MacLennan, G. Peck, S. MacLennan, J. Thomson, J. McGuffee, D. Boyd, S. MacLennan, J. Thomson, J. McGuffee, H. Burley, S. MacLennan. Referee: H. Dallas.

END MATCHES



O'Neill's self-belief is not always reflected in the displays of his Leicester City charges

Beyond all understanding

Do managers understand football? Does anyone? Journalists do not, as any manager will tell you, just as any author will say the same of book reviews. Fans can hardly hope to be any more one-eyed. And club directors? That brilliant maverick, Len Shackleton, put the cat among the pigeons years ago when, in his autobiography, *Crown Prince of Soccer*, he devoted a one-page chapter to *The Average Director's Knowledge of Football*. It was blank.

Recently, after his Leicester City team had lost 2-1 to Arsenal at Highbury, Martin O'Neill, their talented young manager, came into the press conference and told us: "We had a grandstand finish, but I felt we never had that real self-belief that we could come and compete against a very solid Arsenal side. The only belief came from myself."

This bewildered me. If his belief was so strong, I asked O'Neill, why were his initial tactics so defensive, using Kaarmark, usually his right wing back, to man-mark Dennis Bergkamp? "It's got nothing to do with formation," an outraged O'Neill cried. "Let me get that absolutely and categorically clear." It was simply, he insisted, the 3-5-2

formation that Leicester habitually deploy. Up to a point, Lord Copper. With Kaarmark pulled here and there by Bergkamp, Robbie Savage, usually a central midfielder player but notionally his team's right wing back at Arsenal, was obliged to stay deep on the right of the Leicester defence. Just as well, since, in the second half, his clearance off the line enabled Leicester to stay in the game and launch their final, vigorous offensive. O'Neill said that he was "astounded" by my criticism. I thought that he was begging the question. The truth and trouble, perhaps, is that managers get sucked so deep into the details of the game that they lose the wood for the trees.

Glenn Hoddle's learning curve as England coach has been impressively steep. Yet when Italy came to Wembley for the first of their World Cup encounters with England, Hoddle tied himself and his team in knots by suddenly putting in Matthew Le Tissier, a player of huge ability if unpredictable performance who, if picked at all, surely needed careful integration. Cesare Maldini said meaningfully after the game, only his second as Italy's



manager, that there were no more secrets in football. He and Italy also had cause to be thankful for Hoddle's choice of Ian Walker, of Tottenham Hotspur, in goal, despite recent uncertain form, and a reported injury to his left shoulder. But when it came to the return, in Rome in October, it was the veteran Maldini who surely blundered, giving way to public pressure by choosing Filippo Inzaghi, despite his inexperience. Up front and sacrificing a displaced Gianfranco

Zola, the Chelsea forward, in midfield. Italy's coaches tend to do such things at times. When the Azzurri played Argentina in Naples in the semi-final of the 1990 World Cup, Azeglio Vicini, then in charge, controversially dropped Roberto Baggio, restoring Gianluca Vialli, who had been in indifferent form - as he was that evening.

Four years later, in Giants Stadium, New Jersey, Baggio was the fall guy again, pulled off and substituted by Arrigo Sacchi, his nemesis, when Gianluca Pagliuca, the goalkeeper, was sent off. Millions of television viewers saw Baggio mouthing the words "He's mad," as he came off. Enzo Bearzot, the Italy manager in three World Cups, won one in 1982. But when, during the 1974 World Cup in West Germany, he was sent to scout Argentina, he reported that René Houseman, a gifted winger, was playing in midfield! The Italians marked Houseman initially with an inside forward, Fabio Capello, the present Milan manager. Houseman ran rings round him. Argentina scored, and only when the abrasive Benetti relieved Capello, did the tide turn.

This season has provided several such examples. What possessed Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, to play in Strassburg with just one man up front, and to use the slow, vulnerable Ruddock in defence? Why is Steve Coppell, once the ideal Stakhonovite winger, using Attilio Lombardo in midfield, when the Italian is Coppell's kind of right winger? Why, away to Wimbledon, did Alex Ferguson keep David Beckham on the bench so long, only for Beckham, once he came on, to turn the game United's way?

Why, by the same token, did Ferguson last season use Eric Cantona as a single, inadequate spearhead at Juventus in the European Cup Champions' League, where his team were outplayed? Go further back, to 1993, and you find the monumental errors of Graham Taylor, when he threw away England's crucial World Cup qualifying game in Norway. Obsessed by the supposed aerial threat of Jostein Flo from the right, Taylor decided to mark him with a centre back, Gary Pallister, flung his whole team out of gear, and lost. Does anyone understand football?

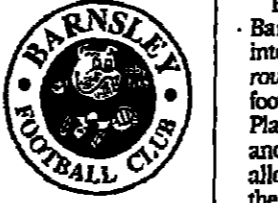
At half-time in the survival game, Mark Hodkinson says there is all to play for

A revolution is under way in Barnsley. Across the town, from Smithies to Worsbrough, Darton to Grimethorpe, they are calling time on the trend of giving pubs fey and fanciful names. The Rose and Thistle became Silvers and then, a year or so later, the Tut 'n' Shive. Meanwhile, regulars found themselves transported from the Magnet, to Dolly's, to the Bear Emporium without ever actually swapping their local. "Some of the changes are absolutely ludicrous," Harold Hackney, the town's licensing chairman, complained. Around these parts, change has to be made with a soft brush of discretion. Too much clamour, and the murmur becomes a moan, becomes a mutiny. There remains a sense of clanishness, born from a mining ancestry where life or death depended on the actions of peers. Within the town, there has been much dewy-eyed sentimentality focused on Barnsley's promotion. A limited run of commemorative promotion tankards was advertised before Christmas. It was another conspicuous attempt to freeze the recent past. The date when promotion was clinched - April 27, 1997 - has become a jewel of nostalgia, caressed and admired like a piece of family silver. Amid all this cosy reminiscing, the roof has started to leak and no one, thus far, has bothered to do much about it. Only now, five months into their FA Carling Premiership campaign, has change been fomented. "We want to be more like Wimbledon," Neil Redfern, the club captain, declared last week. Basically, this means Barnsley are a pub name-change in

Silent revolution breeds resolution

reverse, where they were once Dolly's, they are now the Rose and Thistle. Fey and fanciful football has been superseded by the linear and belligerent. Statistics show that this season has been on the offensive. They have, for example, won more corners than Manchester United and had players caught off-side more frequently than Arsenal. While they have held territory, their naivety has allowed opponents, within a space of a few astute passes, to zip the ball into their net - sometimes with humiliating ease. Over the Christmas period, a draw at Bolton-Wanderers (whom they play in the FA Cup today) and a win against Derby County brought Barnsley four points. In both games, there were perceptible signs of a new maturity. Extra bodies were placed in midfield and the team's natural flair was tempered by caution and an admirable work-rate. These are the primary attributes of the survivor, if not the entertainer. A squad system is also developing

LIFE AT THE TOP



at Oakwell, where there is a queue of eager foot soldiers willing to run themselves into the dust. Sheridan will make way for Tinkler who will make way for Bullock; it will depend on whether the job requires a strategy that is, respectively, holding, man-on-man, or quixotic. Earlier in the season, Barnsley regularly fell into apoplexy when surrounded by stars from football's soap opera. Players like Vialli, Cole and Bergkamp were allowed to race past and the only anxiety of the Barnsley team was the worry that, back home, no one had pressed the record button on the video to frame them next to these comets. Their victory at Anfield in November, though fortuitous, roused an assurance that they were worthy of a place among football's hierarchy. One local paper issued a special badge with the aphorism "Liverpool Kopped It". While it was intended as a piece of fun, it hinted at the parochialism that has sometimes undermined Barnsley. The win was remarkable, but it was not an achievement.

The running-down of the coal industry in Barnsley has left a legacy of mistrust of Government and police. Sometimes the net widens to include any figure of authority or outsider. When the Barnsley supporters sing about the republic of South Yorkshire, there is not a trace of irony. They appear to take a perverse joy in viewing themselves as the forgotten, the wronged. A report just published reveals that Barnsley is near the bottom of the UK's life-expectancy "league". This news was reported locally in an almost gleeful "told-you-so" manner, as if there was kudos in suffering.

Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager, has learnt to harness this powerful negative energy. After his team was disparaged by Mark McGhee, the Wolverhampton Wanderers manager, he pinned up his comments in the dressing-room. This season there is a new Lucifer. Mark Lawrenson might be a composed, perceptive pundit to most of the nation, but to a Barnsley fan he carries a three-pronged fork and a pitcher of molten lava. "I hope Barnsley enjoy the Premiership, because next season I'm afraid they'll be back in the Nationwide League," was his transgression on Match of the Day. Now, whenever Barnsley nudge ahead of their opponents in a match, supporters sing to the television cameras: "Are you watching, Lawrenson?" As we draw slowly into 1998, Barnsley's fight for survival is at its halfway stage. Despite their league position, optimism still triumphs. The demon in their midst might well form a crucial addition to their squad.

Strouts floored by Hamed

JIMMY STROUTS, the Dover Athletic midfielder, was feeling rather proud of himself after scoring all the goals in the 4-0 win over Northwich Victoria recently. So much so that, after retiring to the dressing-room, he confided to his team-mates the secret of his success. Apparently, the former soldier's pre-match preparations had involved staying up into the wee small hours to watch Naseem Hamed's successful world title bout against Kevin Kelley in New York. Strouts clearly spoke too long and loud and when Bill Williams, the Dover manager, got to hear about it, he was less impressed. Making sure that none of his other players would develop such nocturnal habits, he fined Strouts £50 for breaking the team's strict curfew rules.

Vue obscured

When Harvey Cunningham joined Doncaster Rovers on a free transfer from Droylesden in February last year, the winger-cum-full back might well have felt that he had the professional world at his feet. Since making his debut, though, Rovers have plummeted to the edge of oblivion and Cunningham, 29, has

been sent off twice this season. It is therefore highly likely that when he next allows his personal profile to be published, it will not contain the line: Best moment in football: "when I arrived at Belle Vue".

Given the bird

As Kevin Keegan, the Fulham chief operations officer, stood talking on the pitch at Craven



Cottage, reflecting on a third successive victory, against Bristol City, and the subsequent rise of the team to sixth place in the Nationwide League second division, a flock of noisy seagulls interrupted the smooth progress of the interview. Keegan has been known to respond emotionally when provoked on television, but not now. He smiled, looked back at the offending birds and said: "I think Eric Cantona might have something to do with it."

Mad burger

Street traders will try most things to encourage purchase of their wares, but the fast-food seller outside Hillsborough before Sheffield Wednesday's match against Blackburn Rovers on Boxing Day was perhaps taking things a bit far. Offering "Mad Cow" burgers was foolish in the extreme. At £1, fair enough, but £1.60?

Jamie Shore, a young reserve player with Norwich City, will not forget the club's Christmas party, or rather the morning after the night before, for some time yet. Shore awoke in the disorientating surroundings of a hotel bedroom and, as one does, felt the need to rehydrate his body after the evening's celebrations. He could not remember having left a glass of water by his bed but, as needs must, gulped down the lot without a second's thought. It was only then that he realised that contact-lens solution does not have the sweetest of after-tastes. He also discovered, equally swiftly, that none of his team-mates were particularly interested in helping him to locate the missing lenses. STRANGE BUT TRUE: David Burrows, the nonsense, tough-tackling Coventry City full back, includes listening to big band music among his favourite pastimes.

David Hands, rugby correspondent, finds a familiar rivalry resumed in the Tetley's Bitter Cup

Bedford test value of investment

LITTLE save world wars and the introduction of league rugby, has stopped Northampton and Bedford from indulging a perennial rivalry since 1887 and, weather permitting, hostilities will resume at Franklin's Gardens today in the fourth round of the Tetley's Bitter Cup.

The cup game today represents, therefore, not only an opportunity to take a prized scalp but the chance for several Bedford players to put down a marker for the future. "It's a big day for us," Geoff Cooke, the club's chief executive, said.

Northampton continue the refurbishment of Jonathan Bell at full back, but will be without Matt Dawson at scrum half, where James Bramhall will be matched against Simon Crabbe, the young Welsh former Waikato player. Bedford,

affected by several injuries, move Ben Whetstone, their leading try-scorer, from the centre to the left wing with Rory Underwood moving to the right — just as he did for a period when Cooke was manager of England.

There are other first division clubs that will not take their cup commitments lightly: London Welsh, leaders of the Jewson National League first division, will relish the prospect of entertaining Gloucester at Old Deer Park this afternoon.

It was the cup that last brought Gloucester and the Welsh together, in 1983, when the exiles claimed a famous 14-3 victory at Kingsholm. Fifteen years later, Gloucester have

winning run that has eluded them all season, regardless of opponents. They will bring a XV to Sixways boasting six internationals, among them Paul Burke, whose 25 points steered Bristol home at the Stoop.

Source of action at Worcester

Les Cusworth has taken to life in the West Midlands after his time coaching England

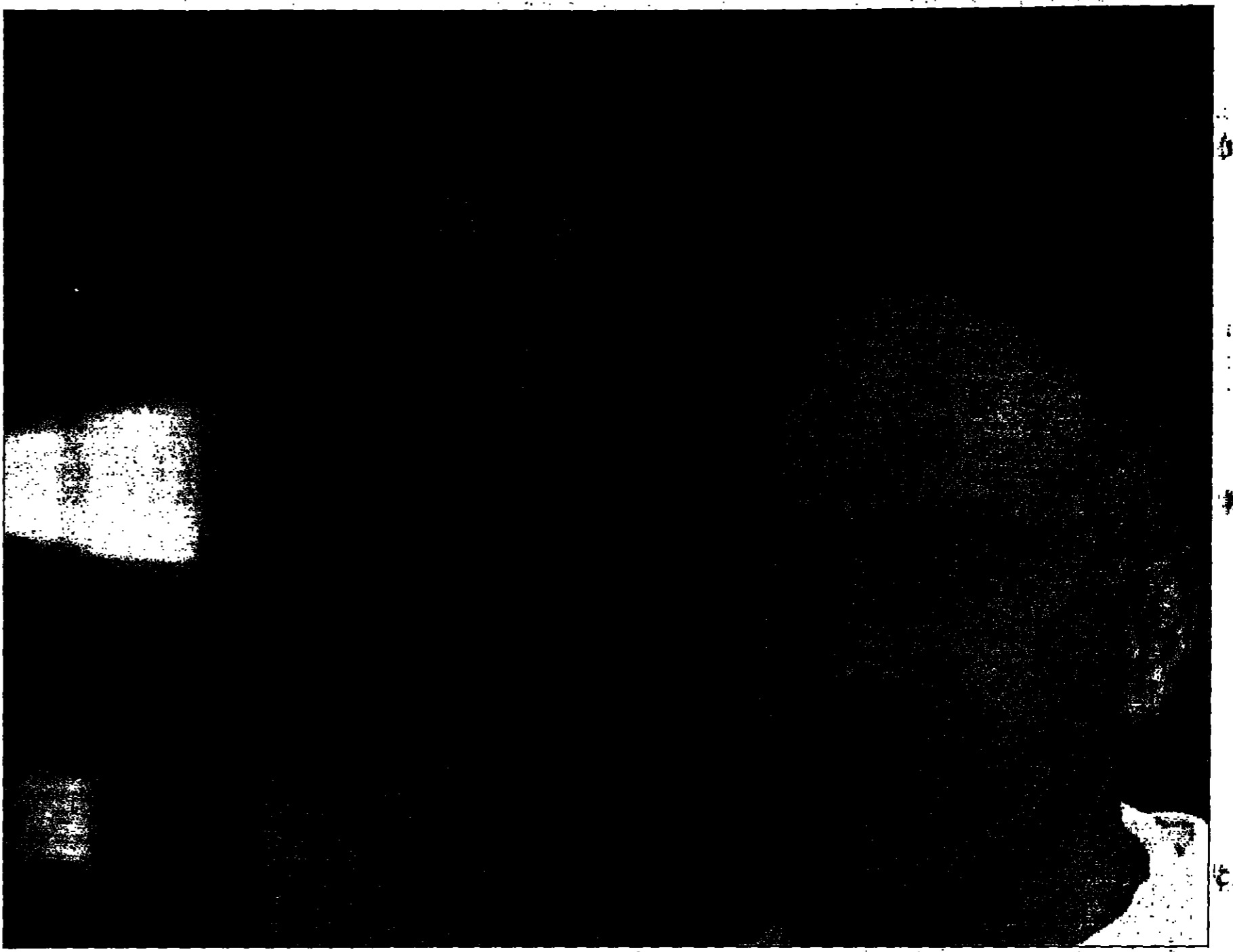
One of the first decisions taken by Les Cusworth when he became the Worcester director of coaching last August was to return the best of Rovers hired for the use of players to the garage whence they came. That kind of perk, Cusworth believed, had yet to be earned by the team being pieced together at the Sixways ground, where the aim is to bring Allied Dunbar Premiership rugby to the Midlands.

43, said. "I thought Cecil Duckworth was a good, honest man, in rugby for the right reasons, aware of the pitfalls but trying to build something progressive for Worcester." "My first question to him was, you've got 17 teams here, what happens to the other 16? He wants them to stay here. He spoke fondly of the Manchester United academy which some people might think is a pipe dream but you have to have leafier parts of the Midlands.

DAVID HANDS



It may not have endeared him to the players themselves but, good Yorkshireman that he is, Cusworth will not have worried too much. The fact that Worcester's name has scarcely rated in rugby terms since the club's foundation in 1871 matters little, given the building blocks he has to play with.



Cusworth is intent on raising Worcester to the heights of the Premiership while integrating the club into the community. Photograph: Gavin Fagg/News Team

adventurous back play rather than for their formidable pack. When he retired he was swiftly pressed into service, first with Leicester's backs and then by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to coach England Students and England A. It is easy to sense an ambition unfulfilled, to coach the England senior team; instead he accepted the position of assistant to Jack Rowell in 1994, stepping away last summer in the knowledge that he could not be a full-time administrator with Worcester and still coach England but also dismayed at the political manoeuvring which led to Rowell's resignation.

Cusworth said. "I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of three and a half years with England. I consider myself to be hugely privileged to have had that opportunity, maybe a little frustrated in the last two years that I couldn't have had a more singular hold on it myself." "But I think the man-management of issues in English rugby leaves a lot to be desired. The political wrangling with Jack and the lack of support at crucial times was not congruous with a side wanting to go forward and achieve the World Cup. There are still a large number of politicians within the RFU looking after their own neck, not England's neck and I found that illuminating."

Much of Cusworth's ire is directed at Don Rutherford, the RFU technical director, for adopting ideas — such as the acceptance of techniques from rugby league — proposed in the early days of Rowell's management team. He also believes that the coaching structure in England requires an overhaul and that the divisional technical administrators (DTAs) should be, in Cusworth's words, "rugby professors" rather than straightforward administrators — as, indeed, the first swath of DTAs was 15 years ago.

On the other hand it is a wonderful opportunity for Cusworth to impress his own vision for the game on a new generation: by way of monthly seminars with local businessmen and parents, many of whom have

had little or no previous contact with rugby, by contact with such strong rugby nurseries as King's and the Royal Grammar School in Worcester, whose students are encouraged to use an indoor training facility that is unique in Britain. Each of Cusworth's full-time players is required to foster one of the club's junior teams, to help sustain the complete image of a community club at a time when many senior clubs are reducing their junior and senior teams. "It's a honeymoon period," Cusworth said. "A lot of people are waiting to see if we fall flat on our face but we are trying to build a structure that will hold good in 20 years' time, not 20 months."

Henry creates storm at Blackheath

Alan Pearey reports on a unique move by Auckland that is breathing new life into English rugby

Only the most reckless gambler would be tempted to bet on Blackheath upsetting Saracens, second in the Allied Dunbar Premiership first division, tomorrow when the sides meet in the Tetley's Bitter Cup. But while the two London clubs are separated by 19 league places, Blackheath can claim to match the ambition of their fourth-round guests at the Rectory Field. Saracens may have Lynagh, Pienaar and Sella, but Blackheath have the whole of Auckland on their side after a unique deal that should be concluded shortly.



Gallagher: acknowledges Blackheath's history

force if we can harness the young talent available. To do that, we need capital and the right management structure. By copying the Auckland model, which has been incredibly successful, we hope to remove the chance of making mistakes." Blackheath's level-headed response to the onset of professionalism may initially have left them well adrift of other, less-illustrated clubs. The club has spawned the advances of more than one potential sugar-daddy, but now plan to have a 25 per cent holding (like Auckland's) in the soon-to-be created limited company. Other investors, interested in the remaining 50 per cent of the club, are said to be queuing up now that Auckland is on board.

"We're the oldest open independent club in the world and have a great heritage," Gallagher, Blackheath born and bred, said. "If you look at our honours board, we've got

lots of internationals. But the last player to be capped for England while playing for Blackheath was over 20 years ago. We think it's about time to redress the balance." "Our agenda is to gain first division status and we have to use all the resources available to ensure that happens. We found the first year of professionalism quite difficult. We all realised the only way ahead was to strengthen the playing stock." Auckland have up-to-the-minute expertise which will be fantastic. They'll be with us for five years minimum." The link with Auckland is only part of Blackheath's "think big" mentality. They have long realised the need for a more visible location to exploit the mass of potential players on their doorstep. To that end, they plan to acquire a second ground, about two miles from their present home and close to the M25 and A2, which would be used by the first team.

Table with multiple columns: CUP RECORDS OF CLUBS IN FOURTH ROUND, GIANTKILLING, RECORDS OF CLUBS THAT HAVE REACHED FINALS, Previous cup meetings, WASPS v HARLEQUINS, Television coverage.

WASPS Metcalfe drive by inn streng

Briton's reputation on the line as Whitbread fleet reconvenes

Smith lacking the cutting edge

By Edward Gorman
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

WHEN a race goes on for nine months and travels 31,600 nautical miles round the globe, by way of eight stopovers and nine separate legs, it is hard to know when the key moment has been reached. However, one thing about the present Whitbread Round The World Race is certain; the crunch time has arrived for Lawrie Smith, of Great Britain, and his young crew in *Silk Cut*.

Some would say — after two fourth-place finishes and a desperately disappointing eighth in Sydney — that Smith's game is already up and that focusing on the minor places is his only realistic ambition. That may well turn out to be true. What is certain is that he cannot afford even one more bad finish; a poor result in the short fourth leg from Sydney to Auckland, which starts tomorrow, will remove any lingering hope of glory.

Lying in sixth place overall, almost 100 points behind the overall race leader Paul Cayard, in *EF Language*, Smith is heavily dependent on elements outside his control. Other boats — especially the three most consistent performers, *EF Language*, *Innovation Kvaerner* and *Swedish Match* — have got to start making big mistakes or breaking down to give *Silk Cut* a chance.

For Smith, there is a lot more at stake than simply winning this Whitbread. The future of his professional sailing career, and his chances of leading a British America's Cup challenge in Auckland in 2000, appear to be resting on his performance in this race. The plan was to roll on from a successful Whitbread campaign into the America's Cup, which would make securing the millions of pounds in sponsorship required that much easier. All that is a long way off at present.

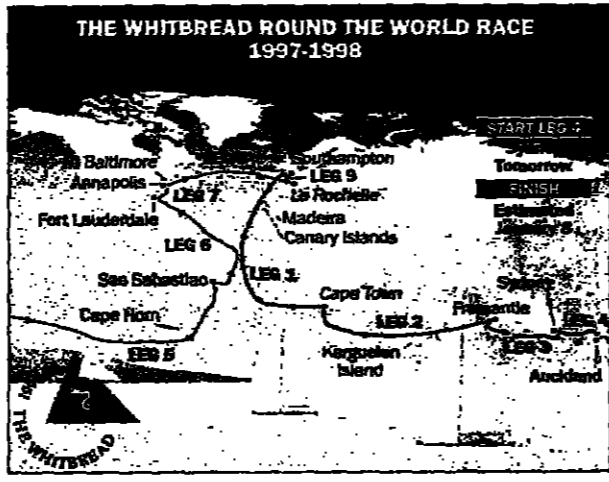
On a personal level, Smith is well aware that this was supposed to be his best chance of winning the Whitbread. He spent a long time sail-testing with *EF* before switching to *Silk Cut*, a company that may have given him a big enough budget to prepare a winning campaign. Although *Silk Cut's* own PR documents refer to Smith as "undoubtedly one of the greats in world sailing", he has in fact won little of significance since his bronze medal at the Olympics in 1992. In the Whitbread he has skipped boats twice — *Rothmans* was fourth in 1989-90 while *Intram Justitia* was second in 1993-94 — so he needs to win to remove any doubts as to his standing.



Gavin Hastings, left, the former Scotland rugby union captain, joins Smith for a practice run in Sydney. Photograph: Stephen Munday/Allsport

The seventh place in Sydney hit the team on *Silk Cut* hard and removed the last residue of the arrogance that emanated from the boat in the early stages of the race. To begin with the "lads" on *Silk Cut* seemed genuinely to believe that they were among the best in the fleet and the realisation that they are not has come as a surprise. It is a bitter irony that, before the start, the general view on *Silk Cut* was that Cayard had lost out on the skipper-swap deal with *EF*, yet it is now Cayard who leads in a boat that Smith himself described as having been "given to him on a plate".

There are many theories as to what has gone wrong on *Silk Cut*; none is conclusive. The crew is young and short of Whitbread experience and notably lacking in recent and regular big-race winning sailors. The navigator is young and relatively inexperienced —



a point that Smith does not appreciate being highlighted — and there is, perhaps, less intensity in Smith's focus than in other skippers, notably Cayard and Knut Frostad, who heads the team on *Innovation Kvaerner*. The *Silk Cut* campaign is also being run on a tight budget with, for example, no full-time shore crew to back up the team at stopovers, unlike all the other big-budget campaigns.

A man of few words, Smith summed up his situation in a

short comment yesterday as he made his final preparations for the dash to Auckland, which is expected to take six days. "It's quick and hopefully we'll have plenty of breeze," he said. "We're ready to go, we have to do well, we have got something to prove."

The approach in the *British* boat is not to change things. Gordon Maguire, Smith's second-in-command, said: "We're in a classic scenario, one third of the way through the race. The first thing to do is not to panic. To change things now would be a worst-case scenario and could end in total chaos. People seem to have incredibly high expectations of us."

"We've never felt they were very realistic. Maybe they are starting to see the writing on the wall now — namely that this fleet is incredibly tough. For us it's going to be one leg at a time — we really don't

want to be constantly worrying and thinking: 'We need a good result or we are going to lose.'"

Other crews are also aware that time and the rough justice of the points system are beginning to tell against them. Just one point behind *Silk Cut* in the overall standings is Paul Standbrock, another Briton, on *Toshiba*. For this leg, Dennis Conner — whose company, Team Dennis Conner, is managing the *Toshiba* campaign — is jolting the boat as co-skipper. Conner is out of shape physically and is going to find six days at sea in a Whitbread 60 uncomfortable. Not alone among the crews, he will be hoping for generally benign weather en route to Auckland.

OVERALL STANDINGS: 1. *EF Language* (Swi) 320pt; 2. *Innovation Kvaerner* (Nor) 297; 3. *Swedish Match* (Den) 284; 4. *Swedish Match* (Den) 283; 5. *Cherry Red* (US) 218; 6. *Silk Cut* (GB) 208; 7. *Toshiba* (US) 207; 8. *EF Language* (Swi) 202; 9. *Swedish Match* (Den) 201.

Radcliffe aims to blow aside two-tier threat to title chance

David Powell looks at a controversial IAAF decision and previews the cross-country races in Durham today

Applauded named the World Cross Challenge — some officials are extremely cross — the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) cross-country grand prix continues on its rounds today. Jon Brown, the Vancouver-based Briton, defends the County Durham International title that he won last year but it is the women's race that should go down a storm.

The weather metaphor is appropriate, given that gales of 80 miles per hour are forecast enough to tip over a lorry, let alone blow an athlete off the chosen racing line. It seemed not to unsettle Paula Radcliffe yesterday. She was more concerned with other things, not least two formidable opponents today, Catherine McKiernan and Sally Barsosio, and the IAAF's decision to introduce two-tier world championships.

Radcliffe came as close last year as any British athlete, on track, road or country, to winning a world title. She was within striking distance of cross-country gold when Derartu Tulu from Ethiopia came past on the sprint. If, or when, Radcliffe wins it, she hopes the achievement will not be devalued by new-style championships.

No longer will there be simply a women's world champion and a men's world champion. There are to be short and long-distance championships, potentially thinning out the most competitive race in the sport, one that brings together runners from a range of events. In Marrakesh this March, there will be men's races at four, and 12 kilometres, women's races at four and eight kilometres.

"If you won the world cross-country, you were the world champion but, if there are two races, it is not the same," Radcliffe said. "Especially in the women's race, where there is less depth. You are diluting the strength."

"Also, I would not see any men switching from 12 kilometres to four but, on the women's side, with eight and four kilometres, it is going to take half and half."

So, now the world championships will have unprecedented appeal for middle-distance runners. It is hard to imagine, for example, that Hicham El Guerrouj, Morocco's world 1,500 metres champion, will not be in Marrakesh.

Great Britain, though, will have to wait to benefit. Kelly Holmes, the nation's one 800 and 1,500 metres runner who would be a medal prospect, is not thinking cross-country — yet. Next year, perhaps. As Dave Arnold, her coach, said yesterday: "To be honest, you can see it is right up Kelly's street."

Holmes is progressing towards fitness after an Achilles tendon tear and ruptured calf muscles forced her off the track at the world championships in Athens last summer. Now caution is essential. "We cannot take

any risks," Arnold added. "But certainly the cross-country is something we'd look at in future."

Radcliffe is using 1998 to experiment. Just outside the medals at 5,000 metres in three successive international championships, she plans to tackle the 10,000 metres in either the European championships, in Budapest, or the Commonwealth Games, in Kuala Lumpur. She favours Budapest, where Brown could replace the European cross-country title he conceded without defending this winter by taking 10,000 metres gold.

Last year, at Durham, Brown beat Daniel Komen, from Kenya, a prolific world record-breaker, but faces lesser opposition this time after the withdrawal of Wilson Boit Kipketer, the steep-pitchase world champion, and Khalid Skah, twice world cross-country champion. Both withdrawals angered Durham officials.

Barsosio, from Kenya, won the 10,000 metres in Athens but, it is perhaps McKiernan, from Ireland, who is the greater danger to Radcliffe. In Berlin in October, McKiernan recorded the fastest marathon debut by a woman, 2hr 23min 46sec.



Radcliffe concerned

The year had been a poor one by McKiernan's standards, partly explained by injury towards the end of 1996. With her sponsorship contract due for review this month, Berlin was well-timed. "I needed to do something to get my name back up," she said. Now she has an improved deal that reflects her role as a potential marathon world record-holder.

If Radcliffe was frustrated at finishing second in the world cross-country, how must McKiernan feel? She has been second four times, never winning. "So how does she feel? 'The world cross-country is annoying me because I have been so near so often. I do not want to leave it hanging at that.'"

She might, though, this year at least. McKiernan is committed to the Flora London Marathon in April and is uncertain whether to race in both. Having stuck to the roads since Berlin, winning all three of her races, McKiernan will be running in her first cross-country since March at Durham. "It's a little bit scary," she said. Scary? Just wait until that gale blows.

Wills Moody dies, aged 92

HELEN WILLS MOODY, who won eight Wimbledon singles titles in the 1920s and 1930s, died on Thursday at Carmel Convalescent Hospital, California. She was 92.

Wills Moody, known for hitting the ball harder than any woman of her time, and nicknamed "Little Miss Poker Face" and "Queen Helen", included the US Open crown seven times and the French Open four times in a career total of 31 grand-slam singles and doubles titles.

Her Wimbledon success stood as a record until it was eclipsed by Martina Navratilova in 1990.

Wills Moody won her first US championship in 1923, at the age of 17 — the youngest

title-holder at the time — and embarked on a 15-year career at the top, retiring after winning Wimbledon in 1938. She held an 18-2 success rate in singles matches in the Wightman Cup, a women's team event between the United States and Britain.

Wills Moody, whose trademark white eyeshade became an enduring tennis talisman, learnt the game without taking a lesson, picking it up from watching players at the Berkeley Tennis Club, California. "Children are great imitators," she said in a 1984 interview. "I watched the seniors play and the visiting Australian champions."

Obituary, page 25

ON MONDAY IN THE TIMES SPORT 98

A free 16-page guide to the national and international calendar for 1998.

From American Football to Wrestling, from England's winter cricket tour to football's World Cup finals, Sport 98 contains a complete listing of the main fixtures for 74 sports.

GOLF Montgomerie seeks rich vein of form

A YEAR that Colin Montgomerie hopes will finally bring him his first major title began with him in Arizona trying to win \$1 million (about £625,000) for two days' work.

To land one of the two biggest prizes in golf, though, Montgomerie first has to beat Ernie Els, of South Africa, the man who has twice denied him the US Open. The pair are in the semi-finals of the Anderson Consulting World Matchplay Championship on Saturday, with the winner then facing either the US PGA champion, Davis Love III, or Hajime Meshiai, of Japan, in the final on Sunday.

WORLDWIDE

Montgomerie qualified for the final four by winning the European qualifier last May, defeating José María Olazábal, Sam Torrance and Costantino Rocca. That guaranteed him \$200,000, but by beating Els he will be sure of \$500,000 and then comes the chance to double his money.

The Scots performance at The Buckinghamshire rejuvenated what until then had been a disappointing season and he went on to be crowned the European No 1 for a record fifth successive time. But still he did not secure a major championship. Els beating him by one shot in Washington.

SNOW REPORTS

Country	Depth (cm)	Conditions	Runs to resort	Weather (Sprm)	Last snow		
AUSTRIA	5-60	good	varied	fair	tar	4/28/12	
FRANCE	58-130	good	varied	fair	snow	2/21	
Alpe d'Huez	58-130	good	varied	fair	snow	2/21	
Arans	100	good	heavy	good	snow	0/21	
Doux Alpes	100	good	heavy	good	snow	0/21	
Flaine	35	130	good	heavy	good	snow	4/21
Meribel	58	130	good	heavy	good	snow	2/21
S. Chevalier	50	185	good	varied	good	snow	1/11
Tignes	59	150	good	varied	good	snow	-1
Val Thorens	70	142	good	varied	good	snow	-3
ITALY	60-200	good	powder	good	snow	-3	
Corvinia	60-200	good	powder	good	snow	-3	
Livigno	65	125	good	varied	good	snow	1/21
SWITZERLAND	10-100	good	powder	fair	snow	0/21	
C. Montana	10-100	good	powder	fair	snow	0/21	
Saas Fee	42	160	good	varied	good	snow	-1
Verbier	10	150	good	varied	good	snow	2/21
Villars	10	50	good	varied	good	snow	2/21

FOR THE RECORD

FOOTBALL	AMERICAN FOOTBALL	ATHLETICS
Bel's Southern League Preston 1-0 Luton 1-0 Luton 1-0	COLLEGE BOWLS Georgia 33 Michigan 29 Florida 21 Texas 14	WRESTLING New York's Day 10: 1. J. Gunn (Dorset) 29.5; 2. M. Gurn (Dorset) 29.5; 3. M. Gurn (Dorset) 29.5; 4. M. Gurn (Dorset) 29.5; 5. M. Gurn (Dorset) 29.5

BASKETBALL	CRICKET	DARTS	ICE HOCKEY
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA) Boston 104 Philadelphia 115	MADRAS MADRAS 104 Philadelphia 115	PURFLEE Purfelee 104 Philadelphia 115	NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL) Boston 104 Philadelphia 115

THE TIMES TIMES

RACING

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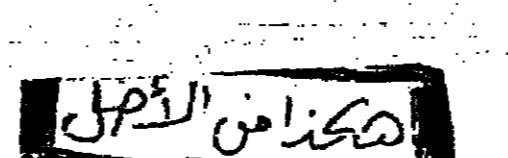
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FOOTBALL

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Reports and scores from the Nationwide League
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Calls cost 50p per minute



Alan Lee, cricket correspondent, says West Indies' dominance is under threat

England can break stranglehold

Modern tours of the Caribbean have invariably been turbulent, prone to trauma, the cricket identified by searching examinations of character. The England players who set off from Warwick this morning must expect nothing less, but this should not mean that they cannot expect to cope, to compete and, quite possibly, to win.

West Indies are more vulnerable than at any time in the 30 years since England last won there. Their batting is fragile, their best bowlers ageing and their festering captaincy issue is threatening to awaken dormant inter-island hostilities. Their invincibility is obsolete, as confirmed recently by a 3-0 embarrassment in Pakistan.

To dismiss them as divided and inadequate, however, would be to underestimate their pride. The success of their team, particularly at home and, perhaps with empirical significance, specifically over England, is the currency of public self-respect. The people, not to mention the players, have relished the dignity of cricketing riches and they will not easily settle for poverty.

To conquer the legacies of so many barren years, of 12 series without a victory, England must show unrelenting strength and unity. They must also hope for some luck and, in this regard, they have made a poor start. The loss of Darren Gough, their match-winning fast bowler and uplifting personality, even before the mission is under way, is a cruelly pre-emptive strike of fate.

Injuries to fast bowlers are a plague on the England team, not least because their resources are relatively slim, and the impact of Gough's absence can scarcely be overstated. His face, his style and swagger, seem emblematic of the good times. His flair and ability to surprise were a potent factor in England's make-up, something exotic to complement the essential oxygen of technical disciplines. The job will be tougher without him; it may also be less fun.

So it will be on their discipline, their ability to do the fundamentals correctly even under the colossal stress and scrutiny unavoidable in these islands, that England will now be judged. Here, there are reasons to be cheerful, for this party has a worldliness to it that bodes well in the Caribbean. Nine of the 16 were on the last tour, four years ago. Four — Stewart, Hussain, Russell and Fraser — are making their third visit.

In 1994, the vision of a new, young, bright-eyed team backfired badly on England. They were innocents abroad, losing the first three Tests and the series before rallying stirringly to win in Barbados. The revival was to the eternal credit of Michael Atherton, on his first tour as captain. He, and everyone else involved, will know a lot more this time around.

They will know, for instance, what to expect in Jamaica, traditional venue for the opening Test, and how crucial it is that they respond well. In 1994, England wilted there under a sustained and cynical barrage of short-pitched bowling. Atherton, deliberately targeted as visiting captains have been down the years, was heroic but unavailing. Others were less well equipped. Courage will be tested again, come the end of January, and the entire series could be dictated by the outcome of this first match.

Before then, probably this coming week, the West Indies Board must take a far-reaching decision, either to persevere with the captaincy of Courtney Walsh or to appoint his impatient heir, Brian Lara. The complexities of the decision stretch beyond the quality of the men involved, to the passions of their island supporters.

If the board appoints Lara, a Trinidadian, how will Walsh's Jamaican countryfolk react during the first Test? Moreover, would Walsh further inflame the situation by advancing his retirement, as has been rumoured? The fact that the second Test is scheduled for Trinidad presents the situation in reverse.

Age, tactical acumen and the general mood for change are all on Lara's side. Local odds have also now shifted in his favour, not least because of the team's decline. His own sulky, insubordinate nature, however, is against him.

Whatever the board decides — and it has already vetoed one attempt by the selectors to instal Lara — the saga will be unsettling to the peripheral players, so the England party would be content for it to continue.

Walsh and Lara are the key figures in more than this single sense, for they are also the best West Indies bowler and batsman respectively. Walsh, though 34, remains remarkably fit and capable of prolonged, accurate aggression. Lara, despite a distinctly mortal Test average of 36 over the past two years, will rise again, one suspects, as soon as

mood and circumstance coincide. It is their ability to get along together, no matter how the verdict falls, that is in question.

Clive Lloyd, the team manager, was blunt in his criticism of the team's batting in Pakistan and promised changes. It is hard to see where these will be made, though, and a familiar top six of Campbell, Williams, Lara, Chanderpaul, Hooper and Adams seems likely.

The newer faces, at least to English eyes, will feature among the bowlers, where Franklyn Rose and Mervyn Dillon are likely to make up the four-man attack with Walsh and, if he has recovered fitness, Curly Ambrose. West Indies still have no spin bowler worthy of the name, however, and on the slower of their pitches — Georgetown, for instance — England could steal an advantage by pairing Robert Croft and Philip

Tunnell against notoriously susceptible batting.

For the most part, seam bowling will rule. With Russell being the intended wicketkeeper to allow Stewart his head at the top of the batting order, England will be limited to four specialist bowlers, and through Caddick, Headley and, perhaps, the old warhorse, Fraser, or Cowan, they must make up in sustained control what they lack in speed.

The batting will depend heavily upon Atherton's adhesion, Stewart's momentum and the growing influence of Thorpe in the middle order. If the series is to be won, however, England must consistently post first-innings scores in excess of 300, and that will require the emergence of Crawley, Ramprakash or maybe even Hollis as a regular heavy scorer.

This is a well-chosen England party, suitably rested for a daunting year ahead. That schedule, including series to come against South Africa and Australia, will seem immeasurably more attractive if they can justify the confidence of Atherton and the ebullient coach, David Lloyd, by succeeding on this first assignment.

They will be properly prepared, having taken up the option of what Lloyd calls a "leisurely build-up" at the newly built training facility on Antigua. A week of nets will be followed by two non-competitive matches, before the start of the serious match programme in Jamaica on January 16. A long road lies ahead but, for once in the Caribbean, the rainbow at its end may be no illusion.



Atherton, left, leads a well-prepared and properly balanced England team against West Indies, who are troubled by the captaincy issue involving Walsh and Lara, right



TOUR PARTY

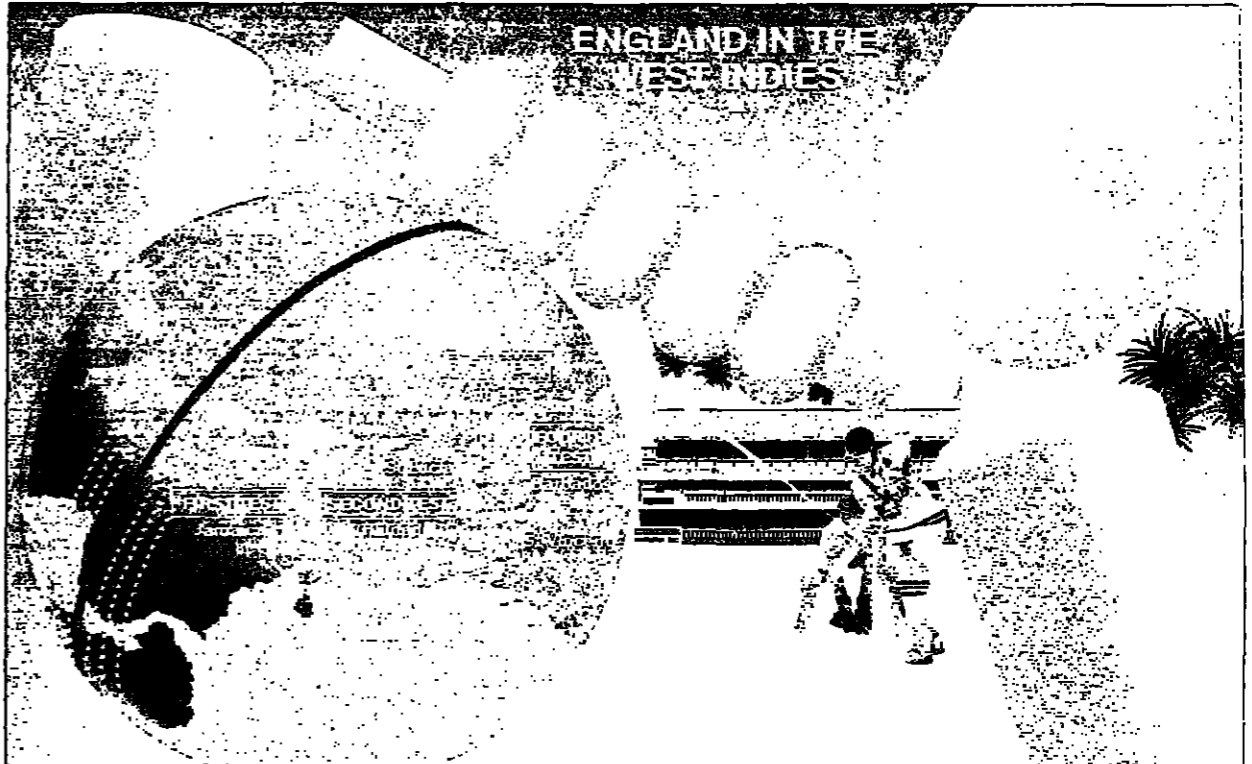
M A Atherton (Lancashire, captain), N Hussain (Essex, vice-captain), M A Boucher (Somerset), A R Caddick (Somerset), A P Cowan (Essex), J P Crawley (Lancashire), R D B Croft (Glamorgan), R C Fraser (Middlesex), D W Headley (Kent), A J Hobbins (Surrey), M R Ramprakash (Middlesex), R C Russell (Gloucestershire), E W Silverwood (Yorkshire), A J Stewart (Surrey), G P Thorpe (Surrey), P C R Tunnell (Middlesex).



Cowan: needs control



Fraser: warhorse



Today: Depart for Antigua
Tuesday-Sun 21: Preparation and practice in Antigua
Monday 22: Travel to Jamaica
Fri 15-Mon 23: v Jamaica
Thu 22-Sun 28: v West Indies A
Thu 29-Mon Feb 2: FIRST TEST, JAMAICA
Thu 2: Travel to Trinidad
Fri 4-Mon 9: v Trinidad and Tobago
Fri 13-Tue 17: SECOND TEST, TRINIDAD
Thu 19: Travel to Guyana
Sat 22-Mon 23: v Guyana
Fri 27-Tue Mar 3: THIRD TEST, GUYANA
Wed 4: Travel to Barbados (on evening of March 3)

Sat 7-Mon 9: v Barbados
Thu 13-Mon 16: FOURTH TEST, BARBADOS
Tue 17: Travel to Antigua
Fri 20-Tue 24: FIFTH TEST, ANTIGUA
Wed 25: Travel to Barbados
Fri 27: v Vice Chancellor's XI
Sun 29: FIRST ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL, BARBADOS
Mon 30: Travel to St Lucia
Wed 1: SECOND ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL, ST LUCIA
Thu 2: Travel to St Vincent
Sat 4: THIRD ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL, ST VINCENT
Sun 5: FOURTH ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL, ST VINCENT
Mon 6: Travel to Trinidad
Wed 8: FIFTH ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL, TRINIDAD
Thu 9: Depart for London

Touring team extols virtue of work ethic

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN NAIROBI

IF HARD work brings any rewards in cricket, the England A touring team should be destined for a highly successful expedition. Since arriving in Kenya on the first leg of the trip, which will take them to further exertions in Sri Lanka, the players have seldom been far from the practice ground. They were allowed time off to celebrate the new year but, otherwise, the gruelling regime has left little opportunity or, indeed, energy for relaxation.

It says something about the attitude of this essentially young party that there have been no complaints and they appear to be enjoying their cricketing activities. This approach should not have come as any surprise, for the tour manager, Graham Gooch, is never afraid of applying the hard-work ethic to his own game, or that of others when he was England captain. With another committed taskmaster, Mike Gatting, as the coach, the players knew they were not embarking on a holiday.

However keen they are to do well on this tour, several have an eye elsewhere. The injury to Darren Gough meant that Chris Silverwood, the Yorkshire fast bowler, has been busy earning air miles. No sooner had he arrived in Nairobi than he was called back to London, en route for the Caribbean

as Gough's replacement. Meanwhile, Dougie Brown, of Warwickshire, is due to reinforce the A team, but not before Wednesday.

There are several players here who will be keen to follow Silverwood westwards. The captain and vice-captain, Nick Knight and Steve James, are two with such hopes and both have looked in good form despite the low, slow pitches that are the norm here.

Mark Ealham has obviously benefited from the advances he made as part of the successful Sharjah contingent, while Darren Maddy, of Leicestershire, has adapted to conditions in eye-catching style.

The departure of Silverwood, the absence of Owais Shah and Jonathan Powell, still in South Africa with the under-19s, and a stomach upset suffered by David Sales has meant that selection for the opening one-day game against the Kenya team, in the same group as England in the 1999 World Cup, was an essentially straightforward matter.

Chris Read will keep wicket while David Nash gets his chance on Sunday in the second match, when Sales should be fit to replace Andrew Flintoff. The Kenyans have a strong batting line-up, but their bowling should not prove too daunting for this determined England party.

Bevan takes centre stage

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

AUSTRALIA were grateful for the recall of Michael Bevan after an attritional first day of the second Test against South Africa at Sydney. Bevan was brought back into the team more for his occasional left-arm bowling than his batting and the move paid dividends as he took two of the five wickets to fall.

South Africa ended the day on 197 for five in 97 overs with Hansie Cronje, the captain, on 56, made in almost four hours, and Shaun Pollock on one. South Africa scored at little more than two runs an over all day.

Cronje and Herschelle Gibbs, who was recalled at the expense of Daryll Cullinan, appeared to have given their team the advantage on a fiercely contested day with a partnership of 97.

It was then that Bevan made his telling impact. First, he tempted Gibbs to slash at a wide ball and he was caught behind by Ian Healy for 54, his first Test half-century. Two overs later, Bevan induced Brian McMillan to pull a full toss to Matthew Elliott at mid-on for six. Those two wickets reduced South Africa to 174 for five wickets after they had been 167 for three.

The decision to bring Bevan back was prompted by recent Sydney Tests, in which spin bowling have played a key role. The same factor influenced South Africa's decision to leave out Cullinan and recall Paul Adams, the left-arm spinner. Play began half an hour late after an embarrassing delay caused by overwatering of a neighbouring

pitch. Darrell Hair and Peter Pfeiffer, the umpires, were prepared to inspect the playing area every 15 minutes as it dried under the hot sun, but Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, said that he was prepared to start playing at 11.30.

Noel Neate, the chief executive of the Sydney Cricket Ground, said that new grass had retained water more than had been expected and left the square too damp. "There was more watering than one would have liked," Neate said. "It was more down to inexperience of the groundsman."

Gary Kirsten was the only wicket to fall in the first session. Beaten by movement off the pitch by Glenn McGrath, he edged to

SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings

A M Boucher lbw b Blewett	39
G Kirsten c Taylor b McGrath	11
M Jurgens run out	16
"W J Cronje not out	56
H H Gibbs c Healy b Bevan	54
B M McMillan c Elliott b Bevan	6
S M Pollock not out	1
Extras (b 4, lb 2, w 1, nb 7)	14
Total (5 wickets)	187

10 J Richardson, P L Symcox, A A Donald and P R Adams to bat.

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-26, 2-70, 3-70, 4-167, 5-174.

BOWLING: McGrath 14-5-31-1, Reffel 16-6-24-0, Warner 22-5-45-0, Brown 23-4-1-2, Blewett 13-5-30-1, S R Waugh 8-4-10-0, M E Waugh 3-1-6-0, Elliott 1-0-4-0.

AUSTRALIA: "M A Taylor, M T G Elliott, G S Blewett, M E Waugh, S R Waugh, R T Ponting, M G Bevan, I A Healy, P R Reffel, S K Warne, G D McGrath.

Umpires: D B Hair (Australia) and P Wiley (England).

Taylor at first slip for 11 when the score was 25.

Australia introduced the medium-pace bowling of Greg Blewett into the attack half an hour after lunch and, with his second ball, he had Adam Bacher, the opener, leg-before for 39. Three balls later Jacques Kallis, who scored a century in the drawn first Test in Melbourne, was run out by a wonderful piece of fielding by Ricky Ponting.

Cronje, who had only just come in after the fall of Bacher, played the ball to Ponting at short mid-wicket. Kallis loitered out of his crease at the non-striker's end and was slow to make his ground when Ponting's throw broke the stumps with Kallis a yard short.

Australia were led on to the field by Steve Waugh, the vice-captain, who is playing in his hundredth Test match.

Andy Flower scored an unbeaten 101 to put the Zimbabweans in a strong position on the first day of their three-day match against a Sri Lanka Board XI in Matara. Flower hit nine fours in 256 minutes — the highest scorer for the Zimbabweans in their three tours of Sri Lanka. He beat the previous record of 78, scored by David Houghton, during the 1983-84 series.

Half-centuries by Grant Flower and Murray Goodwin, a newcomer to the team, boosted the total to 311 for six at the close. Tilan Samarawera, the off spinner, took four for 90 and was the best of the home team's bowlers.

Tendulkar ousted as India return to past

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

SACHIN TENDULKAR was dismissed as the India cricket captain yesterday and replaced by Mohammad Azharuddin, his predecessor. Azharuddin, 34, will lead India in a limited-overs tournament, involving three nations, in Bangladesh next week and to home Test series against Australia.

The announcement came after a meeting of the selection committee, made up of five members. Ramakant Desai, the chief selector and a former international fast bowler, said: "We removed Tendulkar because he could not take the pressure of both batting and captaincy. This is a good decision for India and we are confident that Azharuddin will be able to lead the team well."

With Tendulkar as captain, India have won just three of 17 Tests and 17 of 54 one-day matches. As one of the best batsmen in the world, however, Tendulkar is certain to retain his place in the team. Azharuddin, by contrast, is the most successful India captain ever but was replaced in August 1996 after a disappointing tour of England, when his side lost both the Test and one-day series.

"Azharuddin was removed in 1996 because he was going through a difficult phase in his personal life," Desai said. "But he has passed through that stage and now he is back to his old self."

Azharuddin's hopes of regaining the captaincy suffered a setback last month when the selectors warned him of shunning his colleagues during the recent Sharjah tournament. But the five members on the selection committee unanimously opted for him to replace Tendulkar, according to Jayant Lela, the Indian cricket board secretary.

"The selectors are confident Azharuddin will play well and lead the team well. But I must stress that Tendulkar did not ask to be relieved of the job as suggested in some quarters. His name was also considered at the meeting," Lela said.



Tendulkar: replaced

'Any one of these could be, just could be, the greatest racehorse that ever lived'

Classic circle of folly

The turn of the year brings fresh hope to everyone in the world of racing

I would like to take this opportunity to say a belated "happy birthday" to every racehorse in the land. They had their birthday the day before yesterday. Each and every one grew a year older as midnight chimed, corks popped, bad television flooded the airwaves and everywhere people sang incomprehensible songs with bad Scottish accents.

SIMON BARNES

Talking horse



Racehorses are born throughout the early months of the year, of course. The January 1 birthday is just a bit of administrative convenience — but rather a dramatic one. It is as if someone had said to these leggy, spooky bundles of nonsense: "One, two, three and you're a racehorse."

I went to Arundel to visit John Dunlop's racing yard, something of a homecoming for me. A dozen years ago, I wrote a book about a year in the life of a racing stable. I was able to do so because, with extraordinary generosity, Dunlop opened the doors of Castle Stables to me. I spoke to lads, owners, apprentices, always staying closer to the muck-heap than the champagne bar.

be backed and ridden away, a slim chestnut filly working on the long reins and running herself dizzy around her soft-handed lad.

The lads know that, for a moment, they are richer than any owner

Folly, all is folly. The yearlings come to the yard throughout the autumn, to be backed and ridden away and then to be eased into the hard and thrilling routine of training. No galloping yet, not on those soft, still-growing limbs and soft, still-forming joints.

and spooking at anything they had a mind to. Stable lads work hard and accept hours and pay that only a madman would envy, but as they ride a green and promising yearling and get the daft little thing working in sudden, proud rhythm, they know that, for a moment, they are richer than any owner in the land.

then watch the low, daisy-cutter stride of the racehorse. A little quondam bit of magic. It was at the top of the center-track, where the horses gather to walk around a nice railed ring beneath proud and ancient trees, that I first heard what can be referred to as Dunlop's Law. To this can be added Stoute's Law, which I was taught on the gallops in Newmarket by Michael Stoute when as we watched his excellent Pilsudski prepare for his autumn of glories.

Dunlop's Law tells of the infinite possibilities of folly. "Any one of these," he said, pointing to the yearlings a dozen years ago — not dramatically different from the yearlings of December 31, 1997, or for that matter, from the two year-olds of this morning — "any one could be, just could be, the greatest racehorse that ever lived."

Stoute's Law is complementary to Dunlop's. I asked him if he was surprised at the apparently endless scope for improvement in Pilsudski. "You don't get surprises in racing," he said. "Just disappointments."

and herd instinct, they walked at their ease. But it can turn in a flash. One horse spooks and leaps and a domino effect rushes through the herd. The other day three horses got loose and one lad broke his knee. Every-body knows it is crazy to be involved with horses.

Thus racing and the horsey life continue: a feast of perpetual renewal. Each yearling, or now, as we must say, each two-year-old, will have a brief snatch at glory. There will be no surprises, many disappointments. There will be joys and victories and glories. And possibly, just possibly, any one of them — perhaps that noticeably elegant chestnut filly — will be the greatest racehorse that ever drew breath.



One of Dunlop's potential stars is given a gentle education on the Arundel gallops, while, below, another receives an early introduction to the delights of starting stalls



Dorans Pride gets all-clear for Naas

DORANS PRIDE, the Tote Gold Cup favourite, continues his build-up to Cheltenham when returning to action at Naas today. Michael Hourigan declared the gelding on course for the Boyle Handicap Chase after working him yesterday.



Dunwoody: plum rides

Dorans Pride, 4-1 for the Festival showpiece with Ladbrokes, was forced to miss last Sunday's Ericsson Chase because of an abscess on a foot. But Hourigan reported yesterday: "He worked fine this morning and he will run."

three Slaney EBF Novices' Hurdle. Charlie Swan rides Oonagh's Star for Paddy Mullins in a four-runner field for the 2½-mile contest.

Six runners were declared for the 19-furlong event. Dorans Pride carries 12 stone in the race — to be shown live on Channel 4 — with Manhattan Castle on 9st 10lb and his other four rivals on 9st 7lb.

Norman Williamson will not be appealing against a three-day ban for careless riding he received at Warwick on Wednesday. The ban, which runs from January 9 to 12, rules Williamson out of the valuable Ladbroke Hurdle at Leopardstown a week today, when he was due to partner the ante-post favourite, Commanche Court.

GOING: SOFT. TV: CHANNEL 4

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 2.20 BOYNE HANDICAP CHASE.

MUSSELBURGH

THUNDERER 1.05 Around The Gale, 1.35 Sydney Twothousand, 2.05 Selection, 2.35 Test Match, 3.05 Astral Invasion, 3.35 TOMPETOO (nap).

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) SIS

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 12.25 MAC MERRY JUVENILE MAIDEN HURDLE.

GOING: HEAVY TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 1.05 HOOPS LAURENT PERRIER STEEPLE CHASE.

GOING: SOFT

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 1.25 MUSSELBURGH NEW YEAR NOVICES CHASE.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Lighthill Park 12.40 Danette Times 1.40 Little Progress, Newbury: 1.45 Sister Stephania

1.55 JOINT RACE COMMITTEE HANDICAP

THUNDERER 1.05 Around The Gale, 1.35 Sydney Twothousand, 2.05 Selection, 2.35 Test Match, 3.05 Astral Invasion, 3.35 TOMPETOO (nap).

GOING: HEAVY TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 2.25 BLACK BUN NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE.

GOING: SOFT

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 2.55 QUEENS STAND HANDICAP CHASE.

GOING: SOFT

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 3.25 FIRST OF MANY INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE.

GOING: SOFT

UTTOXETER

THUNDERER 1.05 Around The Gale, 1.35 Sydney Twothousand, 2.05 Selection, 2.35 Test Match, 3.05 Astral Invasion, 3.35 TOMPETOO (nap).

GOING: HEAVY TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 1.35 ADDITION OF NEWPORT NOVICES HURDLE.

GOING: SOFT

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes 2.05 ROGER ASTON NOVICES CHASE.

GOING: SOFT

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and other details. Includes COURSE SPECIALISTS.

RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S TWO MEETINGS

Large table with multiple columns showing race results from two meetings, including race names, winners, and odds.

Parker makes amends on Coqui Lane

DAVID PARKER repaid a debt to owner-trainer Michael Dun when guiding Coqui Lane to a 14-length defeat of Beachy Head in the Western Horse Handicap Chase at Ayr yesterday. Parker had been guilty of a costly blunder when riding the gelding last time he ran at Kelso. Coqui Lane had crashed through the wing of a fence after Parker had become confused over which fences were supposed to be jumped.

0800 44 40 40

'Sitting there, alone in the dark, took me back to my angling roots and somehow beyond'

Rediscovering the art of coarse fishing

The lure of catching great fish close to home tempted Brian Clarke back to the riverbank ways of his youth. He was not disappointed

I took a few trips, of course. After so many years of travelling light — a tiny rod, a box of flies, a spool or two of nylon — naturally it took a while to get back into the swing of things. But then, how could it not? There is a world of difference between light, mobile, fly-fishing for trout, wandering free as the air and the next rise, and the generality of coarse fishing.

I had done a lot of coarse fishing as a lad and, having known nothing before it, took to all that it entailed like an angler to water. But going back, adjusting again to the immobility, assembling again the clutter of tackle, dealing with the mess and goo of baits after the simplicity and aesthetics of pursuing dainty trout, took some getting used to.

It was Chris Yates who persuaded me. The most revered coarse angler in Britain.

'Adjusting back after pursuing trout took some getting used to'

the sometime, long-time holder of the carp record, told me of the great fish to be found in a particular reach of a particular river midway between our

homes. There were not huge numbers of fish, he said, but numbers of big fish. There was talk of 13lb barbel, 25lb carp, 21lb pike, 6lb chub and 1lb dace, all taken by members of the syndicate that had the water in the previous few months. Memories from my teens and early twenties stirred. Would I be interested in giving it a go again? Seriously? Yes, indeed.

And so, one crisp day last March found me tottering and tripping over the meadows, burdened by all of it. I had brought out the ancient, wonderful Wallis Wizard rod I had once done a newspaper round to buy. I had brought out the

ancient, silky-smooth Speedia centrepin reel, duly oiled. There were all the old boxes of floats and weights, the great, long-handled net, the flask and sandwiches (for me), the tins of pork luncheon meat and sweetcorn (for the fish), the metal-framed, collapsible chair.

Opposite the weir-pool, a little downstream from the falls where the water caught the light like bent glass, we had a pow-wow, discussed swims and tactics, floats and weights and drank piping tea Yates brewed in his storm-kettle. Then we fished, Yates using a small lead and exploring the river bed by touch, me opting for the ease of the float.

That first day, as it happens, we both "blanked" — but in the close season that followed, the bug wriggled and began to bite. Come June I was out again, in August once more, in November and December twice apiece. It is not that I was catching a lot — this water is, as Yates warned several times, more fishing water than catching water — but I got a few and rediscovered

much. Take the fish. When trout anglers are fishing, they are utterly single-minded. Other fish become a nuisance, a distraction, even, in the minds of a blimpish few, vermin. Yet to set the trout aside, to go after coarse fish for their own sake alone, is to see each species beautiful in its different way, to recognise — no surprise, this — that each kind needs a different approach based on its special behaviour, to understand quickly how many fish are far more difficult to catch than the average stocked trout.

There may be an element of novelty involved, of course, but if I had to pick out two highlights from 1997, both would be from coarse-fishing days.

One afternoon in August I found two great chub basking close to the surface, each one behind a dense weed bed that broke the current in heavy, deep water. In the space of three hours I did not make a single cast that attracted interest, although I crept through sedges six feet high crouched to half their height, kept the rod down, moved so slowly that I scarcely knew I was there myself, cast so gently the freed line that made scarcely a ripple going in. I came away from the water nettled, cramped, frustrated and humbled — but seized



'Opposite the weir-pool we had a pow-wow, discussed swims and tactics, floats and weights and drank tea.' Clarke, left, and Yates in conversation

with the fascination of the challenge.

The second experience was an afternoon in December, on a branch of the river opposite the place that Yates and I had first tried. Immense barbel live there. They move about but have preferred places. They are impossibly difficult to deceive.

I forsook the float and touch-ledgered, Yates style. I used four or five swanshot maybe two feet from the hook. They gave me just enough weight to touch and hold bottom, offered just enough buoyancy on the current to allow me to trundle the bait a yard or two if I raised the rod and encouraged it.

I fished a size-four hook tied directly to a 7lb line with large chunks of pork luncheon meat as bait. Barbel love luncheon meat and, pound for pound, will fight as hard as any salmon fresh in from the sea.

I sat back from the water's edge in my little chair, absolutely still. I held the rod in my right hand, felt the line in the fingertips of my left. With the rod balancing on my crossed knees, there was no weight to distract. The line ran straight from my fingers down to the river bed where I knew the great fish lived. I imagined them there, hugging the bottom, sensing my bait approaching it.

Little by little, the light faded. The trees struck back to silhouettes, the reflections left the water and it darkened to pewter. The moon came up. The river eased and slid and made soft, liquid noises. The line in my fingertips became an electrified nerve, formed a link between my imagination and the deep-water dark.

Gradually the messages coming up the line took on more meaning. I began to map out the river bed in my mind. I found myself differentiating between the grating touchings of the leads tumbling over gravel and the slow, silken slide as they passed over mud. I came to recognise, sometimes, the gathering

heaviness of a weed before the line let go. Just occasionally I felt an exploratory "pluck-pluck" that had me hair-triggered and alert, with every nerve tingling and each sinew taut. Sitting there, rooted alone in the dark, took me back to my angling roots and somehow beyond.

Of course, fishing for chub and barbel was not the whole of my year, or even the main part of it. Game fishing and fly fishing are still my great love. Yet to rediscover coarse fishing has given me excitement too long forgotten. It gave my fishing year a new kind of roundness that I plan to carry forward. Its clutter is easily shouldered.

AWAITING THE WINNERS will be either the New England Patriots or Pittsburgh Steelers, who face each other at Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh. The past two AFC representatives in the Super Bowl, the odds favour the Steelers, who won 24-21 when they met in New England three weeks ago.

In the National Football Conference, the Minnesota Vikings, dramatic victors against the New York Giants last week and bursting with confidence, visit the San Francisco 49ers, while the Tampa Bay Buccaneers travel north to take on the Green Bay Packers. Tampa Bay have never won a match played in temperatures lower than 55C and it is likely to be far colder than that at Lambeau Field.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Denver aim to settle old scores in play-off

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

IN A sport as gladiatorial as American football, it is usually the portent of an especially good game when somebody says, as Neil Smith did this week: "These teams just don't like each other." A bitter, brutal match is almost guaranteed, the kind that spectators love to watch. In this case, it involves the Kansas City Chiefs and Denver Broncos.

Smith should know. The defensive end spent nine seasons with the Chiefs before switching to the Broncos this year and, after bad-tempered encounters in the regular season, these two American Football Conference (AFC) West division teams meet again tomorrow in the National Football League play-off. At stake is a place in the AFC final next week.

Although Denver won their first match 19-3, the return at Arrowhead Stadium, the venue today, went to Kansas City 24-22, sparking a run that took them to the AFC West title. The Broncos had to beat Jacksonville 42-17 last Saturday while the Chiefs had the week off, something that may prove important.

Waiting the winners will be either the New England Patriots or Pittsburgh Steelers, who face each other at Three Rivers Stadium, Pittsburgh. The past two AFC representatives in the Super Bowl, the odds favour the Steelers, who won 24-21 when they met in New England three weeks ago.

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AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

THE TIMES

A chance to go the distance for Diana

Wanted: 20 people to run the marathon as fundraisers for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund



The Times has secured 20 places for its readers to take part in the 1998 Flora London Marathon and help raise more than the target of £5 million for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund.

The Times 20 will be part of Team Flora, in which all the runners will be fundraising for the Memorial Fund, one of the two official charities for the race next year. A special panel has been set up to select readers wanting to 'Run for Diana' over the historic distance through the streets of London on Sunday, April 26.

The Times will also publish the complete results of the race — from the international heroes and heroines at the front to the determined joggers at the back.

There has already been unprecedented interest in the 1998 event. A record 100,000 people applied to enter, including 20,000 who specifically responded to an



invitation to run for the Memorial Fund.

This year, it was televised in more than 100 countries and 600,000 people lined the London streets to cheer on the 29,135 competitors, who ran from Greenwich to the Mall, triumphantly finishing the course of 26 miles 385 yards.

The fund-raising for the

Memorial Fund will be poignant for many of the competitors next year because they will be running on the streets where the coffin of the Princess was carried at her funeral on September 6. It will also be 10 years since she was the official starter of the 1988 event.

Applications should not

come from people who have already been informed that they have been selected to take part in the 1998 race.

The names of the chosen 20 will be published in The Times on Monday, January 19 and the newspaper will then highlight some of the runners' stories and preparation in the build-up to the event itself.

THE TIMES DIANA TEAM COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Read the form below carefully: the judges will base their decision on what you reveal in this form. All the winners who take part in the marathon on April 26 will be asked to sign a pledge form relating to their commitment to raise funds for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and to remit such funds by May 31, 1998. Our

entry forms for the chance to win a place in the Diana Team should reach the following address by January 9, 1998: The Times Diana Team, Flora London Marathon, PO Box 5071, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7FY. Judging will take place on January 14 and the winners will be informed by telephone by January 19.

Title..... Initials.....

Surname.....

Address.....

Day tel.....

Even tel.....

Age..... Female Male

Occupation.....

Which category do you wish to enter?

Men Women

Do you suffer from any illness/es?

Have you been in hospital for an operation? If yes, state what and when

Have you, a relative or friend, ever met Princess Diana? If yes, describe the occasion

Have you, a relative or friend, any connection with any of the Diana, Princess of Wales, charities, or a special reason for wanting to be in the Diana team? Describe your connection

Have you ever competed in a marathon before?

How much money did you raise?

For which organisation/s?

Have you raised funds for any organisation/s before?

Describe how much you raised and how you did it

Do you have any outstanding achievements of which you are proud? Tell us about them

What are your hobbies?

State, in not more than 50 words, why you deserve a place in this year's marathon

Please send the completed entry form to: The Times/Diana Team, London Marathon, PO Box 5071, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7FY

CHANGING TIMES

سكان لندن



How to be the perfect chauffeur

Page 48



Cessna purrs into the clouds

Page 49



In praise of the fastest women

Page 50



SATURDAY JANUARY 3 1998

The woman you could not invent

Mae's real life beats the advert

The television commercial is full of drama. The Volvo V70 plunges through a blizzard and teeters on a precipice, displaying its road-holding qualities and its renowned safety features in conditions dire enough to defeat a jet helicopter.

Yet, however compelling in the rufous world of automotive hyp, the storyline is feeble compared to the real life story of the woman at the wheel. For she is a doctor with a difference. Mae Jemison is a doctor, chemical engineer and sociologist who has worked as a volunteer in refugee camps in Kenya, Cambodia and Cuba. She has trained as a dancer, appeared in *Star Trek* and been voted one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world, set up a series of science camps for children and she's an astronaut.

When the space shuttle Endeavour blasted off in September 1992, Dr Jemison became the first Afro-American woman in space and the first Science Mission Specialist. During her eight-day flight she carried out a series of experiments ranging from the effects of weightlessness on the reproductive systems of frogs to the development of more efficient semiconductors.

"Being an astronaut is a big kick. You get to fly in a supersonic aircraft, to do scuba diving, weightless training, you get to be involved with all kinds of different experiments. When you stop and look

Alan Copps on the estate-driving mercy doctor from outer space



Volvo V70 AWD: now owned by superhumans, apparently

out of the window and think about where you are it's a 'wow' or an 'oooh' feeling. For me it was more an affirmation than a revelation that I am a part of the universe, not separate from it, and that was probably the most comfortable warming feeling I've ever had. I tried to frighten myself thinking there was just the wall of the crew compartment — maybe 2ft thick — and that if the hatch were to open it wouldn't be a good thing, but I couldn't make myself afraid. In fact I'd have loved to be up there by myself, in a big glass bubble, it was that connected and that warm."

But being an astronaut is just part of the extraordinary life of Dr Jemison. She was born in Alabama in 1956 but grew up in Chicago, where she acquired that taste for bliz-

zards that comes through so strongly in the commercial.

Her father, a construction worker, used to take her hunting and fishing. Nobody ever said "it's not ladylike to play in mud or play with mechanical things". When school was over she headed for Stanford University to do two degrees at once, chemical engineering and African and Afro-American studies. Then she studied medicine at Cornell University before heading off to work in refugee camps.

If that sounds enough for a lifetime, it was merely the beginning for a woman with a huge appetite for work and a passion for exploration. Returning from her first foreign experience she headed to the Los Angeles County Hospital to

put her medical studies into practice, a period she describes as "tougher than astronaut training". As soon as she had qualified as a doctor she was off again on a 2½-year mission with the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone.

"I found a level of energy in those people that is sometimes missing in the US. Life isn't just about how many possessions you have, there's something deeper which has to do with how you connect with other people."

She returned from her second foreign trip to practise as a GP in Los Angeles while continuing her engineering studies. Bitten by the space bug she applied to Nasa and in 1987 was one of 15 trainee astronauts selected from nearly 20,000 applicants.

The fame she gained from space gave her the inspiration to set up her own enterprise, the Jemison Group, devoted to giving more people access to science and technology. Now, she runs science camps for 12-16 year olds. "When I think about the test tubes, I think about the fun of using my own creativity, and that's what I've wanted to convey in the curriculum."

But she is still also working in Africa, to improve communications using Nasa technology. With such a life, who better to show that a Volvo V70 AWD will get the doctor up the mountain in the snow? Interview by Tony Sleep, The Volvo Magazine.



Mae Jemison: doctor, engineer, sociologist, dancer, actor, one of the world's most beautiful people, and astronaut

It's true: Volvo drivers can sprint on water

A Swede can fly: Vaughan Freeman on the boat for weekend runs and racing

If James Bond needed a new speedboat, this is the best that Q would dream up for him. The 80mph DPX24, a winged machine that spends as much time soaring over the water as it does cutting through it.

The name suggests its conception in science fiction looks. Yet it's all in wings and fins, it is as easy to drive as an automatic car, but offers scintillating performance.

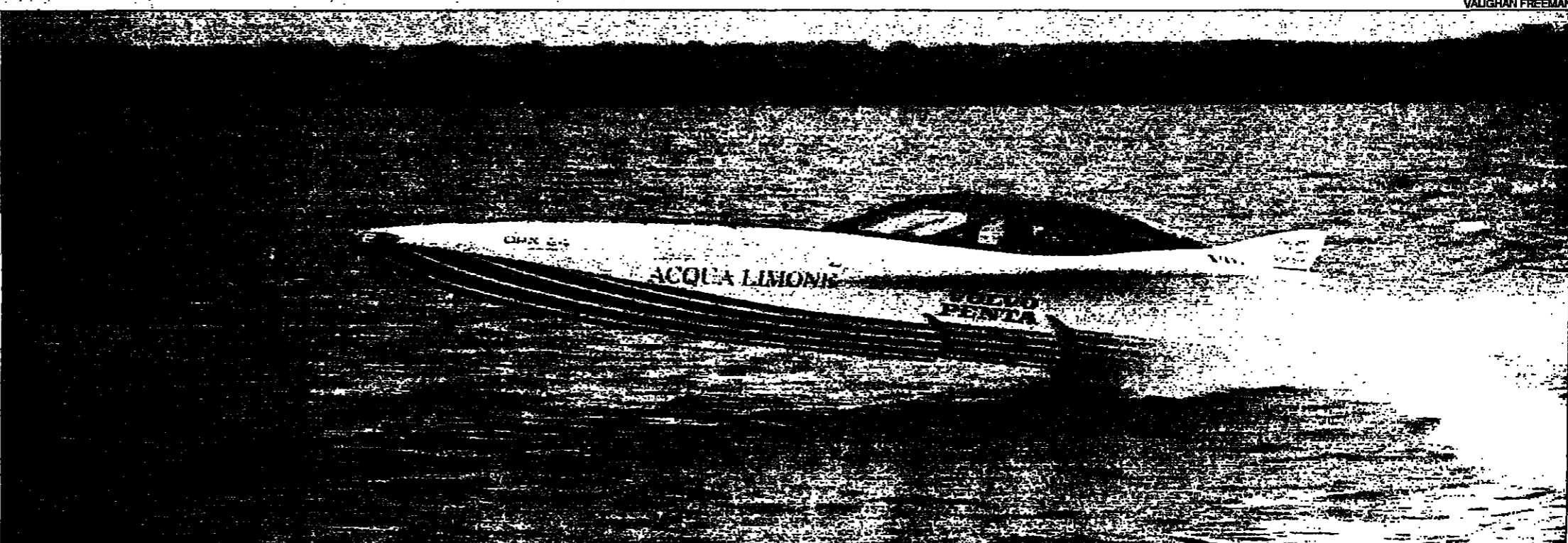
Powered by a 5.7-litre Volvo Penta V8 petrol engine, the DPX24 will star at this month's Autosport International Show in Birmingham, where it will feature alongside Volvo's British Touring Car Championship 540 saloon.

Key to the DPX24's future, however, isn't its looks, but plans to use the boat to create the first de-mo offshore powerboat race series, with events starting in the UK in May. While one-make racing, designed to give drivers similar machinery so that the most skilled will rather than the ones with the most money, has long been established in car racing and sailing, the idea is new to powerboat racing.

The boat is the brainchild of Swedish designer Ocke Mannerfelt, who designs everything from rowing boats to environmentally friendly container ships. He designed his first powerboat for his son, Ted — who is now a world champion powerboat racer.

Mannerfelt envisages the one-make series tempting all sorts of competitors: "We expect people who have never been in a powerboat before to have a go, especially anyone who enjoys car motorsport. If you drive a car, you can drive this boat."

To test that theory, Ocke entrusted the controls of only the second DPX24 built to

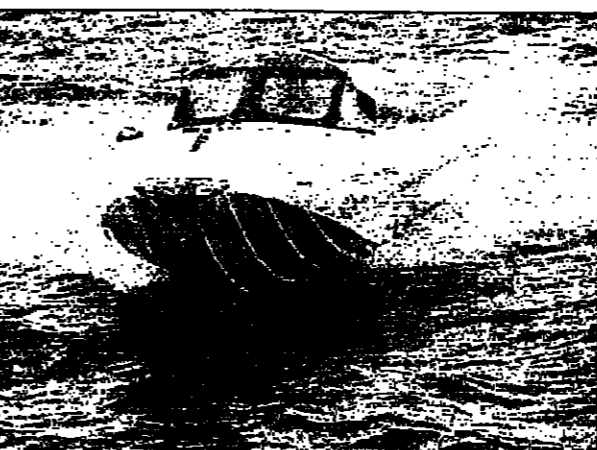


Bottom of the hull is stepped so that at speed air is trapped underneath to create a cushion, allowing the DPX24 to fly almost clear of the water; the wings and fins give stability once it is all but airborne



Cabin is surprisingly spacious, with paired bucket seats

VOLVO DPX24
Engine: 5.7-litre 280bhp V8 petrol.
Performance: Top speed 76mph (66knots), 0-60mph in nine seconds.
Equipment: Self-righting capability, built-in fire extinguishers, oxygen supply for driver and co-driver, heater, knife to cut through clothing in event of emergency.
Price: £29,800 (before tax).



Long nose makes an E-Type Jaguar look self-effacing

your novice correspondent on the Baltic Sea near Stockholm. The phallic shape makes even the long-bonneted Jaguar E-Type seem shy and retiring. Shaped like a paper dart, the triangular glassfibre hull sprouts wings either side and an upright rear tail fin.

The bottom of the hull is stepped so that at speed air is trapped underneath to create a cushion, allowing the DPX24 to fly almost clear of the

dragging water; the wings and fins give stability once it is all but airborne. The final look owes much to the hours of wind-tunnel testing at Coventry University.

The canopy is fully enclosed, entered by two gullwing doors that open on to a roomy cockpit fitted with two race-car style bucket seats. There is a tiny steering wheel that snaps off Formula One style, and a gear-lever for forward and

reverse. The accelerator pedal is the size of a dinner plate and there are also controls to adjust the two propellers' angle to the water for maximum power and to tune the ride angle by pumping water into a tank at the front.

Phenomenal speed and acceleration of 0-60mph in around nine seconds is due to its light weight of 1,200lb and its stepped hull, but also to its drive technology. Power is de-

livered through the propellers, mounted one behind the other which spin in opposite directions. This allows power to be delivered cleanly and the boat to take off in a straight line.

At rest the boat sits nose up, making it virtually impossible to speed it rises out of the water and levels off. The faster it goes, the smoother the ride gets up to 76mph (66knots). Turning is like driv-

ing a go-kart, instant and responsive, with the added bonus that the boat banks aircraft-style into corners.

Safety is a priority, and DPX24 owners get the world's biggest airbag — the size of a small car — which deploys automatically, should the boat capsize, to right it.

Volvo Penta has long made serious marine engines, but why such an innovative move into powerboating? Spokes-

man Jan Dahlston says: "Boating as a leisure pursuit has been losing out to other activities. The DPX24 and the one-make series of races is intended at reversing that trend."

Mannerfelt adds: "It is also part of Volvo's continuing campaign, with its new sportier cars such as the S70 and its BTCC racing, to create a fresh, sportier image as a manufacturer that makes cars that are fun to drive, as well as being very safe."

If there is a worry, concedes Dahlston, it is that the boat is too easy to drive: "The novice feels safe in the cockpit, so it is easy to forget how fast the DPX24 can go." Accordingly, customers will be given the opportunity to undergo individual tutoring in safe seamanship and racing driving.

Of course, you do not have to race the DPX24. As Mannerfelt says: "This boat offers optimum performance. Roads, rightly, are governed by laws. But you can take the DPX24 and run it flat out offshore without restrictions whenever you want."

BOAT SHOW

THE ENGINE of the DPX24 will be on display at the London International Boat Show at Earls Court from January 9-18. Admission: £9 per adult. Two children go free with each paying adult. Additional children £7. Evenings only (after 4pm) £5. Advance tickets are available until January 5 at £7.50. Telephone 0121-767 4600. The show is open 10am-7pm daily, except January 15 when it remains open until 9.30pm, and January 18 when it closes at 6pm. The boat will also be on show at the Autosport International Show, which opens at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham on January 9. For opening times and other information see page 48.

Vertical sidebar containing various advertisements including 'Cotswold', 'DRIVE', 'LAWYERS', 'LANDROVER DISCOVERY', 'THE ANDRETTI LEAD DRIVE', and 'RUCKSHANK 100%'. It also includes a small table with text and a logo at the bottom.

There is an insidious threat behind the drift towards cars that make drivers redundant. And if that can be applied to the elderly, why not everyone else?

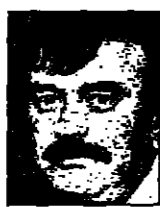
Buy an oldmobile and forget it all

Call me a suspicious old grump, but what is all this codswallop about the imminent arrival of motor cars specially designed for old people? Certain car companies, I read this week, are working on models that will have everything from chunky steering wheels, the better to be gripped by frail hands, to laser sensors to guide the elderly into parking spaces.

According to the car companies, they have climbed into their altruistic overalls to work on these new motors, which have nothing to do with making a profit. Perish the thought. The object is to make a contribution to road safety, which manufacturers are so concerned about that they still go out of their way to impress us with how fast a car will get from 0 to 60mph.

This new breed of cars —

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



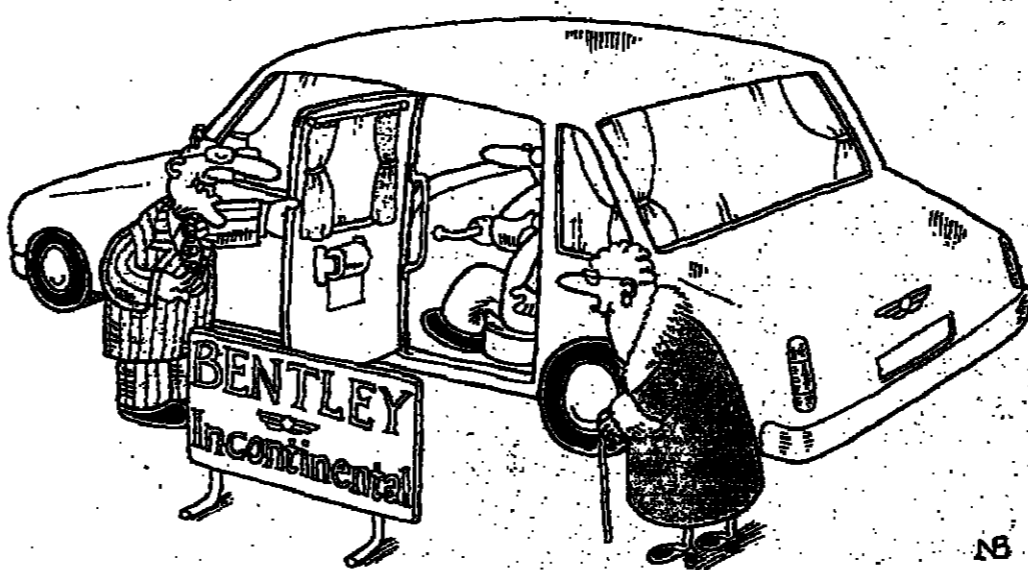
Peter Barnard

already labelled "oldmobiles" — is aimed at the "grey market", an area of huge potential growth because the percentage of the population aged over 60 increases every year. These cars will virtually drive themselves: they will have video cameras to relay road condi-

tions and an advanced version of cruise control to regulate speed.

BMW, Ford, Toyota and Rover are among companies working on these cars, which could be on the road in a couple of years. No doubt technicians are sincere when they say that the cars could reduce accidents. There is even a claim that road rage could be reduced, because elderly drivers will delay younger ones less often.

Some of these claims are fanciful to say the least: the most notorious incidents of road rage, for example, do not involve the elderly. But there is a much more insidious threat behind the oldmobile — the drift towards cars that make their drivers redundant. And if that can be applied to the elderly, why not everyone else? We shall soon have a blame-free motoring culture, in which every accident can be ex-



plained away by the failure of some hi-tech equipment.

And where is the evidence that old people are worse at parking than everyone else? If the elderly need a laser guidance system that takes over the job of parking, why should not the rest of us have the same device? Let's forget driving skills altogether — the real danger

of these developments, of course, they will turn all the occupants of a car into passengers. No wonder Tony Blair has won the support of many people in industry, for he and many industrialists share a belief that they know best, that the state (and big business) can run our lives better than we can. They will even drive our cars for us.

Not mine, they won't. The most important skills needed at the wheel of a car are awareness and judgment, neither of which can be learnt except through experience. And neither can be taught to a computer, which is why computers have limitations. They are, for one thing, only as good as the humans who program them.

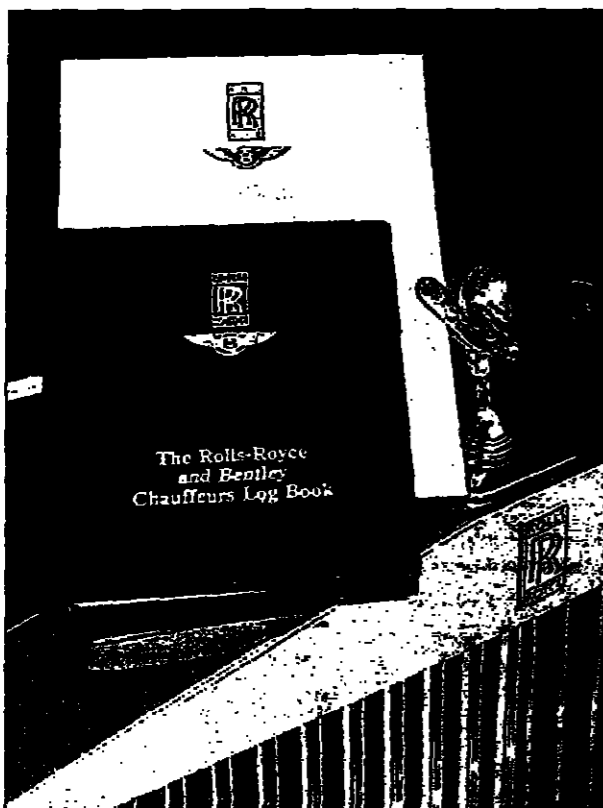
I am all for car industry huffins coming up with new leas, including daft ones. But the are lots of purely mechanical developments that drivers, old and/or so old, would benefit from here we need to get ourselves staled on the more exotic shores of chnology.

Elderly drivers wil stiffening joints would all befit from automatic transmission yet manufacturers still charge adiculously high premium for at simple device. Visibility whil parking would be better if all cs, not just some, automatically craged the rear window wash-wip when the car was put into revere. Designers could also make parng easier if they designed the re end so that it could be seen byre driver during reversing (the sae applies to the front of many car).

Power steering, incrbly, is still only an option a some models. If I was a comany in search of a marketingploy, I would bring out a versit of the model most likely to appd to the elderly that had power ceeng, automatic transmission ad other aids to ease of handling — all for the price of the basic ca. That would be a lot more impressive than fancy laser guidance systems. And a lot less likely to go wrong.

Rolls-Royce drives chauffeurs up the wall

Ian Adcock tries out the course where skid pans, baby oil and elbow grease sort the lords of the limousine from the cabbies in caps



How it is done: Crewe's gospel according to James

The Rolls-Royce and Bentley Chauffeur's Log Book contains lots of homely advice for the aspiring Jameses of this world. On page 5A-1 it recommends that he, or she, should "Use unscented deodorants which will not overpower scents and perfumes worn by your passengers." And it also recommends the use of baby oil in special circumstances.

Being a full-time chauffeur in this egalitarian age might seem as irrelevant as having a man with a red flag walk in front of your car, but as anyone who has driven down Park Lane can confirm, there's still a need for them.

There are plenty of private courses for aspiring chauffeurs, but the certificate to have bears the linked Rs of Rolls-Royce and the winged Bentley badge.

Rolls-Royce's first school was established in 1919 at Alkanton, a few miles from its Derby factory. Now it is based at Crewe.

Some 55-60 drivers attend the 4½-day courses each year. A number of owners also attend the courses each year. The latter, like Clyde Malby who had bought a Bentley Turbo R, just want to learn more about the cars' abilities and how to drive and pamper their £143,000 investments.

passengers, deportment and etiquette," something Rolls-Royce and its instructors take very seriously. "You should not," says the handbook, "enter into conversation unless first addressed by the passenger, and your reply should be brief but courteous. Further conversation should not be continued unless encouraged by the passenger."

Oh, and "Avert your eyes from lady passengers wearing revealing clothing."

Old-fashioned as this advice might seem to most people, Rolls-Royce lays great store by instilling into its pupils the correct manners. The best chauffeurs, says Steve Tomlinson, who was taking the class I attended, are good communicators with their bosses. Phrases like "confident and discreet", "seen and not heard" are drip-fed to the pupils throughout the week.

Personal appearance might be important, but even that takes second place to how the car looks. Those gleaming limousines that whisk the great and powerful around the country only look like that because the driver has spent hours washing, polishing and valeting his charge — by hand.

Rolls-Royce's recommended cleaning system depends almost entirely on elbow grease. Using a car wash or even jet washes — except for clearing road dirt off the wheel arches or the car's underside — would be enough to get you excommunicated.

Even the mention of electric polishers brought frowns of disapproval from the instructors. To valet a Crewe product fully would take a working day — and that is a weekly ritual to prevent road dirt caking on to the car. Waxing the car, done every quarter, would add almost another day to the schedule.

"It's attention to detail that counts," says Tomlinson. "If

Red mist took over as the pupils competed

the participants' armour then the skid-pan opened them wide. Hurling the former Mayor of Chester's car round a figure of eight skid pan, while Ferris commands the skid trolley to throw you from understeer to oversteer quicker than it takes to say "Ma'am" looks thrilling, but it's deeply frustrating as two and a quarter tons of Bentley pirouettes faster than Nureyev.

Despite their coaching during the timed runs over the figure-of-eight course against a time set by Ferris, most of the drivers blew it. With Ferris standing in the centre goading them on, egos and red mist took over as the pupils tried to outdo each other.

To the accompaniment of squealing tyres and clouds of tyre smoke — they get through a set of Avon rear tyres each day — and comes being skidded aside, the drivers displayed all the self-control of demolition-

derby participants. "It's a case of going slower to get there quicker," said Ferris. "Only two ignored my shouting, but that's what this driving course is all about: we put them under pressure and they have to respond positively to that by ignoring it."

At the end of the driving day the group was divided: Malby and Hubeau were prepared to learn and listen, they felt they had come away better drivers who knew and understood the charges a little more.

Of the duo who chauffeur the Lord Mayor of London around, Ashley Higgins was deeply hurt he hadn't been perfect while Paul his colleague was more plegmatic. Finally there were the anonymous Mr X and Mr Y. "No names or pictures, our bosses wouldn't like that."

Mr X could see and understand where he went wrong, but Mr Y just smiled. After all,



None of the students got full marks on the parking test, Mr. All had to polish up rigorously on the art of making a Bentley look brilliant.

the car looks good, we look good." By the end of that afternoon the Bentley Turbo RT we worked on gleamed and sparkled in the afternoon sun. It seemed a shame that in less than 24 hours it would be covered in road grime and dirt.

New Bentley owner Malby admitted to feeling intimidated when he first drove his car. Although he'd owned Range Rovers, the size of the Bentley in London streets was unnerving. A morning spent with Ferris and Tomlinson on a manoeuvrability course and later on a skid-pan soon cured him of that.

"We're not trying to teach people how to drive, just knock the rough edges off, hone their skills," explains Ferris, who was wise enough not to mention that by the end of the day there would also be a few punctured egos.

Fair of the student chauff-

eurs looked confident enough when they saw the manoeuvrability course: only Malby and young Rudi Hubeau from Holland — first time in the UK, never mind driving a right-hand-drive, automatic gearbox Rolls-Royce — were understandably nervous.

For a Rolls-Royce chauffeur, manoeuvring between tight traffic, parking in restricted places means "right first time": no "dry steering" while the car is static and when you have a parking space only inches longer than the car and you must end up six inches from the kerb you are reversing towards, that is not easy.

Although it's probably easier than docking the Mir space station.

Despite their experience, not even the professional chauffeurs scored 100 per cent during the final manoeuvrability test. Clipped poles, shuffling and dry steering,

never mind parking so far from the kerb that your passenger would have needed to order a taxi to reach it, knocked off plenty of points. "The average score is about 80 per cent," explains Ferris. "People put themselves under too much pressure to do well and make mistakes."

As Tomlinson remarks, the driving courses are designed to do just that because: "The chauffeur has to remain cool and calm at all times and never allow himself to be pressurised, even if his boss is screaming at him to get a move on. At the end of the day, it's the driver's responsibility to see that everyone arrives safely and unfustered. It's also his driving licence that is at stake, not the passenger's."

If the manoeuvrability course had showed chunks in

the previous evening he had been boasting none and all that he was a "fling brilliant driver". But of a those who cracked under pressure, he was the worst.

Being a professional chauffeur is no easy job and the Rolls-Royce course quickly weeds out those who won't make the grade. "This course is just the beginning; successful participants come on to a defensive driving course — once they've been tested."

The very best will eventually qualify for a solid silver badge and certificate of merit. To achieve that demands perfection all throughout the course and that happen rarely — only 6,709 six records started in 1933 and 26 in the past three years.

And the baby? A light coating on forward facing paint surfaces or nightwork will prevent fires from sticking and getting baked e-

Flying latest Cortina a rookie delight

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هكذا من الأهل

Flying's latest Cortina is a rookie's delight

Eve-Ann Prentice tries Cessna's new version of its ever-popular 172

She is named after a bird of prey, but a pussycat might be more appropriate. The engine purrs, the upgraded look is sleek and she manoeuvres with graceful ease — though you must still treat her with respect.

The creature is the new Cessna 172 Skyhawk, a revamped version of the aeroplane beloved by generations of trainer pilots, instructors and aircraft owners. More than 35,000 Skyhawks were built between 1956 and 1986; now the latest in this long line of tried and tested Cessnas has made its debut.

Having recently gained a private pilot's licence after training on low-wing Piper Warriors, Cherokee and Cadets, a flight in the new Skyhawk was my first chance to try a new aircraft type, like taking the wheel of a different car for the first time after the driving test.

The prospect of progressing from Piper to high-wing Cessna seemed daunting — until I had the control column in my hands and the rudders at my feet, when the aeroplane seemed like an old friend.

Accelerating down runway Two at Kidlington airport near Oxford, the new Textron

Lycoming engine, which can develop 160hp at 2400rpm, makes this a markedly quieter aircraft than the Pipers — a boon for pilots flying out of the increasing number of country airfields faced with ever-stricter noise abatement rules. For as well as being intended as a good training aircraft, the Skyhawk is promoted by Cessna as a sound investment that will hold its value.

But don't you have to be Lottery-winner rich to buy and run a brand new aeroplane? Home-built aircraft can be bought in kit form for a few thousand pounds, the same price as many cars. A new Cessna Skyhawk with state-of-the-art navigation and radio equipment and autopilot costs £92,168 from the manufacturers in America. You will need another £7,000 to have it flown to Britain, modified and registered for flight here and to undergo a Certificate of Airworthiness. Around £3,800 a year is needed to insure, park and maintain your aeroplane, and about £23 per flying hour for fuel. Not a cheap toy, for sure, but still less expensive than kitting out many rally cars or buying a modest yacht.

Assuming you have decided it is more fun to fly than to



Bill Tollett says the new Cessna's only quirk is "you have to be careful not to load it with passengers, golf clubs, and fuel... it won't get off the runway".

rally car, what is the Skyhawk like to fly? It smoothly and quickly reaches 60 knots, you ease back on the control column and are airborne. It was one of those rare winter days of perfect calm, so the aircraft was able to display its best behaviour.

That said, however, two key aspects of flying the Cessna would make it easy to handle irrespective of the weather: the high wing means there is no fuel pump to remember to switch on and off when taking off and landing; and fuel injection means you can also forget carburettor icing, an almost constant threat to most single-engine aircraft, which can cause engine failure.

Being able to forget these two checks brings a more relaxing flight, with extra time to concentrate on navigation.

CESSNA 172
Engine: Textron Lycoming 160hp.
Seats: Four.
Cruise speed: 122 knots on 80 per cent power at 8,000ft.
Range: 580 nautical miles at 80 per cent power at 8,000ft.
Service ceiling: 13,500ft.
Price: £99,168 plus VAT.

or just enjoy the view. At 3,500ft, we soar along a celestial highway marked out by some of the whitest and fluffiest clouds this side of heaven. Then, just south of Banbury, Bill Tollett, the Kidlington instructor accompanying me, suggests we try a couple of stalls. This is not as dramatic

as it may sound, and simply means stowing the aircraft down to the point where the airflow over the wings is not fast enough to maintain lift. The slower the stalling speed, the less chance of inadvertently stalling while carrying out other manoeuvres, such as low-level banks when turning on to the final approach to land. And the more easily an aircraft can be recovered from a stall, the more confident a rookie pilot such as myself will feel. The Cessna was a gem.

After making the usual checks to ensure we were high enough and of no harm to anyone but the odd sheep in the unlikely event that the engine would not hum back to life afterwards, I pulled off all power and raised the Cessna's tail. The official stalling speed with no flaps is given as 51 knots, but there was no sign of the tell-tale buffet as the

needle on the air speed indicator dropped back to 50. "Pull back harder," said the affable Bill Tollett. It was not until the speed had plummeted to just under 45 knots that the aeroplane gave a little sigh rather than a full-blown shudder. Had it not been for the altimeter showing a dramatic swift decrease in height, you would barely know the plane had stalled.

The left wing dropped but, a second or so after putting the nose forward and applying power again, the Cessna regained flying speed and we climbed effortlessly back to 3,500ft.

Back in the circuit at Kidlington, I did wonder whether landing a high-wing aircraft would prove testing. It was a doddle. Though seasoned Cessna pilots say the aircraft can be more difficult to bring to earth than low-wing types in windy conditions, the

only quibble I had was that, while the high wings give good forward visibility, it is hard to keep a good lookout for other aircraft above, especially when climbing. Tollett, an instructor for 20 years, says: "It is the sort of aircraft someone could buy as their first aeroplane. It is roomy, quiet and comfortable. The one snag with it is you have to be extremely careful not to load it with passengers, golf clubs, and fuel... it won't get off the runway."

Cessna is pitching the 172 as a safe investment and a comfortable, easy-to-fly aeroplane which should be treated almost as a car. It even has two doors, which means you don't have the sort of ungainly scramble across seats when climbing in and out of, say, a Piper Warrior.

CSE Aviation is a Cessna dealer selling at factory prices. Call 01865 94255 for details

Classic year for rallies now in store

RALLYING: It looks like being a vintage year for classic rallies. In March 50 classic cars will set off from London to Jerusalem to mark the 50th anniversary of Israel's foundation and raise funds for a reservoir project. Entrants are promised a wonderful adventure through France, Switzerland, Monaco, Italy, Greece and Cyprus. (Information: International Festival Services 01789 72299).

June sees the London to St Petersburg Rally, the first to be organised on behalf of the Organisation for Educational Resources and Technological Training. Drivers will take a 3,000-mile route through 12 countries. (Information: ORT 0171-440 8523).

October features the most ambitious of all: the London to Cape Town classic reliability trial and 4x4 adventure run. The search for cars and partners is now on — the organisers provide a mix-and-match for those who may lack one or other. (Information: Hero 01886 533505).

Electric charge

FUELS: Nissan is unveiling a new electric vehicle, the Altia EV at this month's Los Angeles Autoshow, which it claims has a greater range, 120 miles, than any other EV on sale in Europe or the USA. It is the first to be powered by Lithium-ion batteries of the type used for laptop computers.

Silverstone gold

RACING: Silverstone celebrates its Golden Jubilee in 1998 and a series of special events is planned at the home of the British Grand Prix including a son et lumière and fireworks party to be attended by 20,000 people who have availed themselves of the Northamptonshire circuit since 1948.

MERCEDES
A NEW S1230 4.0 and 4.2, 24V, 250hp, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 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David Coulthard is tipped to take Schumacher's crown: Byron Young on the Scot who would be king

'If I have to drive on roads for over an hour, I get frustrated'

David Coulthard remembers the angry man on the Hogarth roundabout in West London well. Grand prix driver and Road Rage Man were converging on the same spot. "He was hanging out of the window, waving his arms and screaming insults. I'm not saying I am whiter than white but I don't leap in front of other cars or jump queues, so this caught me by surprise," says the McLaren driver. "Suddenly, while in full flow he recognised me, smiled, and waved me through. Totally ludicrous. Anger is not a good thing in cars because you lose the ability to make reasonable decisions. I never get angry when I am racing."

It is difficult to believe that the mild-mannered Scot ever gets angry. Nothing seems to ruffle him, not even the order to allow teammate Mika Hakkinen through to win the last grand prix of the season in Spain. Former boss Frank Williams tells of seeing Coulthard crash at over 100mph in Hungary. As he watched the spinning car on television, Coulthard calmly explained over the radio that he was not sure what happened but would wait for the car to stop and then work it out.

Jackie Stewart, a fellow Scot, and three times world champion, believes that Coulthard could overtake Michael Schumacher as the dominant Formula One driver — a timely speculation for the forthcoming Autosport International.

At 26, Coulthard is relatively young for one who has travelled so far: at the same age the racing career of Damon Hill, now 37, the 1996 World Champion and Coulthard's teammate at Williams that year, had barely begun.



Against the odds, Coulthard wins last year's Italian GP

And the results in the later races of last season suggest that Coulthard's McLaren-Mercedes could be the pace-setter of 1998. Two grand prix triumphs against the odds and a season of astonishing starts have compounded the growing belief in many quarters that Coulthard, rather than Hill, is best positioned to be the next British Formula One champion.

But hours spent in the cockpit at 200mph have left him with an understandable indifference to the mundane plodding of road cars capped below 70mph — with one notable exception. The love of his life is a grand dame of the highway,



Coulthard signs fans' programmes at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone. He has achieved much at a young age, and is backed by pundits such as Jackie Stewart

AUTOSPORT SHOW
Autosport International at Birmingham's NEC runs from January 9-11. Entry to the main show is £11, with £8 extra for the Live Action Arena. Advance booking allows entrance to the Arena at £5. Booking: 0121 767 4747.



Despite a professed dislike of driving, Coulthard cherishes the design of his old Mercedes 250SL

reason he will not spend £750,000 on a McLaren F1 supercar when it will be driven only a few thousand miles a year. "I would never ever spend that amount of money on a vehicle. I've driven one, they are fantastic cars, great fun, but I don't get up every morning and think 'I wish I had an F1'. I like comfort and an automatic box."

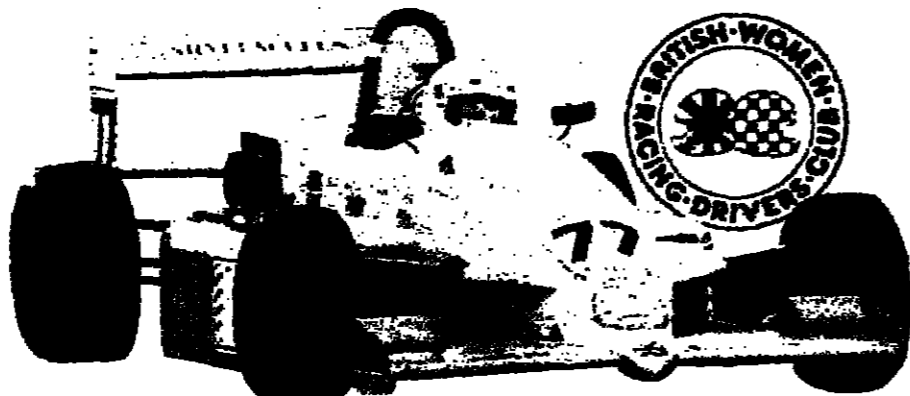
In fact, driving usually bores him, he says. "If I have to drive more than an hour from the airport to the circuit, I get frustrated. I don't want to experience that hour. I want to get there and do my job."

Even though he spends weekend after weekend studying the complexities of making his thunderous 700bhp race machine quicker and quicker, he says this interest does not spill over into his 280 SL.

"I leave all the mechanics to the experts — I've had ten years of dirty hands. The only thing I like to do is polish the car, because I believe I care more and will do a better job than anyone else."

Britain's fastest women line up to drive men off the winners' podium

Alan Coppins on the racers aiming to bring girl power into pole position



Amanda Whitaker, above and below, has won the British Monoposto Championship twice

The fastest women in Britain, including four who have won motor-sport championships in the past year will gather this week at Autosport International, the show that celebrates motor racing in all its forms.

The line-up at the show, which opens to the trade at the NEC in Birmingham on Thursday and to the public on Friday, will be the most successful ever, according to the British Women Racing Driver's Club, which was founded in 1962 to encourage women in what has always been seen as a male-dominated sport.

Leading the line will be Amanda Whitaker who has been racing since she was 15, when she took to the track in a 100cc kart. Last year she was outright winner of the British Monoposto Championship for the second year running, taking her Formula Vauxhall Lotus to seven pole positions, nine outright wins, seven fastest laps and four new lap records. That is an impressive achievement in a competition that covers all the most difficult tracks in the country and

where all but two of the competitors are men.

She was offered the drive in Formula Vauxhall in 1994 after competing for the previous two seasons in Formula Fords. That year she was Northern Driver of the Year, because she had started racing near her home in County Durham. She won the Lord Wakefield Trophy for outstanding achievement by a woman driver in 1996 and is now seeking to raise sponsorship of £40,000-£60,000 to compete in the TVR Tuscan Challenge in 1998.

Amanda, who works as an administrator for a printing company, probably rates as the most successful British woman driver at present. But she was joined as a national track champion in 1997 by Ilsa Cox who has been racing since 1988 and who won the Handy Gas saloon car championship at the Castle Combe track in



Wiltshire. Out of nine rounds, she took seven pole positions and won six races overall with one second, one fourth and one non-finish. Driving a modified 1.9-litre Peugeot 205 GTI she triumphed over a field of 60 registered drivers, 58 of whom were men.

Ilsa graduated from the Brands Hatch school of racing and has since specialised in saloon car series, using the Peugeot 205 GTI and a Volkswagen Golf GTI in a number of championships. In 1995 she missed the Handy Gas championship by just one



Ilsa Cox, who shares her car with her husband, won the Handy Gas saloon car championship at Castle Combe

point but was still made Driver of the Year at Castle Combe.

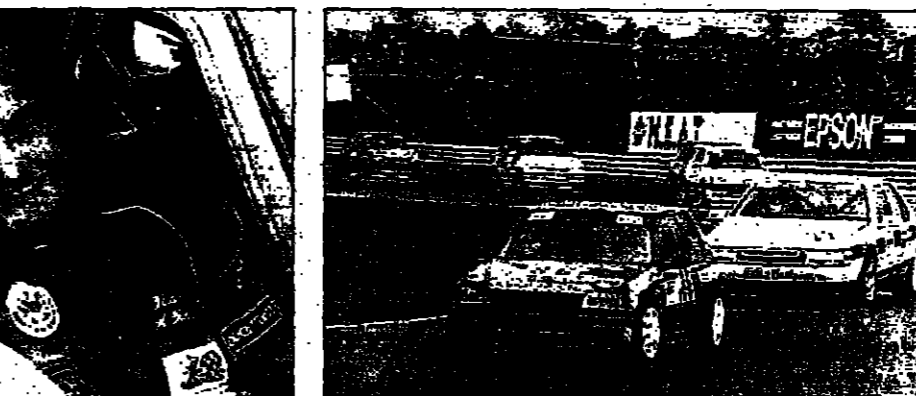
She shares her car with her husband Brian, who competes in the British Automobile Racing Club modified saloon championship, although he admits he deferred various rounds so the car could be prepared to further Ilsa's championship campaign.

The other winners include the Stimmont sisters, Stephanie and Rachel, who in their Ford Escort won the 1997 British Ladies Rally Championship for the third successive year. Their results included 19th overall in the RAC Rally, when they were up against the full house of World Rally Championship contenders.

But however hard the BWRDC tries — and it now has more than 100 members — it is likely to be a long time before women break into the top rank of racing. In the 50-year history of the Formula One World Championship only one woman has ever gained a point, the Italian Lella Lombardi who finished sixth in the Spanish Grand Prix of 1975 in a March Cosworth.

But there are now more women competitors at all levels of the sport, including Paula Cook, who regularly races in the British Formula Three championship, one of the traditional stepping stones for those who wish to break into Formula One.

On Thursday, press day at Autosport International, the



1997 British Ladies Rally Championship winners, Stephanie and Rachel Stimmont



BWRDC will be using the stand of the RAC Motor Sports Association, racing's governing body in Britain, to introduce a number of women who compete in various disciplines. They range from Suzi Hart Banks who secured second place overall in the closely

contested Ginetta G27 series, to Susie Stoddart — a young Scottish contender in TRM Yamaha Kart racing, who scored her first class win last year.

Others include Helen Bashford-Malkin, who was third in her class driving a Shadow DN9 in the EIA Cup for thoroughbred Grand Prix Cars, and Claudia Hurlgen who took three wins in the GT2 Division of the FIA GT championship, driving a Porsche 911.

For further information: BWRDC 01566 86215

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

EMERSON FITZPATRICK WAS THE YOUNGEST EVER F1 WORLD CHAMPION...

...AND JUAN MANUEL FANGIO THE OLDEST

ENZO FERRARI'S MOTHER CHOKE TO DEATH ON A HARD BOILED EGG...

THE MINIMUM SPEED ON THE GERMAN MOTORWAYS IS 37 mph

Home Sec

Liability as

From Po to Chec

The ultimate reference guide to the 1997 General Election results

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سكان النهر

Home Secretary bound by facts

Regina v Secretary of State for Home Department, Ex parte Danaei
Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Ward and Lord Justice Judge

Judgment November 12
When exercising his power to grant an asylum-seeker exceptional leave to enter, the Home Secretary was not entitled to disagree with a finding of fact by an independent adjudicator who had heard all relevant evidence, unless that finding was flawed or fresh evidence had become available.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment when dismissing the appeal of the Secretary of State for the Home Department against the decision of Mr Justice Collins (The Times March 28, 1997) to quash a refusal of exceptional leave to enter and to remit the matter for the secretary of state's reconsideration.

Mr Nigel Fleming, QC and Mr Steven Kovats for the secretary of state; Mr Nicholas Blake, QC and Miss Stephanie Harrison for the applicant.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said that the applicant, an Iranian, had applied for political asylum on the ground, inter alia, that he had been discovered in an adulterous relationship and was at risk of flogging or worse if he returned to Iran. The Home Secretary regarded

the story of adultery as a fabrication invented to substantiate a bogus asylum application and rejected the application. The asylum-seeker appealed.

The special adjudicator accepted his account of adultery but rejected his account of his evidence and dismissed the appeal. The applicant then applied to the Home Secretary for exceptional leave to enter. The Home Secretary rejected the application, stating that he continued to consider the adultery episode to be implausible and fabricated to substantiate the application.

The critical question raised by the appeal was the extent to which, in exercising his power to grant leave to enter, the secretary of state was in practice bound to accept findings made in the immigrant's favour by a special adjudicator on a related although failed asylum appeal.

His Lordship reviewed the relevant legislation and authorities. The Home Secretary had submitted, relying on, inter alia, *Ethasoglu v Secretary of State for the Home Department* (1997) from AR 380, that the decision to grant leave was his alone, and provided he took into account the adjudicator's findings and explained why he disagreed with them, he was entitled to come to a different conclusion, provided it was rational.

The applicant had submitted that the Home Secretary could

only reach a different factual conclusion from the adjudicator if he had good reason to do so.

In considering whether good reasons existed, it was submitted, two matters had to be borne in mind:

1 That the adjudicator had the advantage of seeing and hearing the witnesses as they gave their evidence.
2 That the adjudicator was an independent appellate authority deciding issues of fact impartially as between the rival parties, whose independent role in the legislative scheme was exemplified by, inter alia, his power to review the Home Secretary's decisions on questions of fact.

His Lordship said that those two considerations taken together were of great importance. In that respect *Ethasoglu* was distinguishable, since there the secretary of state had additional material available to him relating to the general situation in a foreign country which would not have been before the adjudicator, and the adjudicator enjoyed no special advantage from having heard oral evidence.

In the present case, however, the primary fact in question was whether or not the respondent was an adulterer. On such an issue, it did not seem to his Lordship reasonable for the Home Secretary to disagree with the independent adjudicator who had heard all the evidence unless only:

1 The adjudicator's factual conclusion was itself demonstrably flawed as irrational or for failing to have regard to material considerations, none of which was suggested here.
2 Fresh material had since become available to the Home Secretary such as could have realistically affected the adjudicator's finding.
3 Arguably, if the adjudicator had decided the appeal purely on the documents, or if, despite having heard oral evidence, his findings of fact owed nothing to any assessment of the witnesses.

His Lordship found the suggestion that there was fresh evidence before the Home Secretary hopelessly insubstantial and also rejected the Home Secretary's contention that he was entitled to disagree with the adjudicator given that he had reached his conclusion solely by reference to the inherent probabilities rather than by any assessment of the witness and agreed with the judge that, although he did not say so in terms, the adjudicator was inevitably influenced by the applicant's evidence.

In those circumstances, the Home Secretary was not entitled to disagree with the adjudicator's finding of fact, and the appeal would be dismissed.

LORD JUSTICE WARD agreed and **LORD JUSTICE JUDGE** delivered a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Winstanley-Burgess.

Neighbourhood nuisance relevant

Northampton Borough Council v Lovatt and Another
Before Lord Justice Henry, Lord Justice Pill and Lord Justice Chadwick

Judgment November 11

The provisions of ground 2 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985, whereby a protected tenancy could be forfeited under a court order for possession if a tenant or person residing in the dwelling house had been guilty of conduct which was a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, were not limited to acts of nuisance arising from the demised premises but were capable of including other acts of nuisance committed within the neighbourhood of the council estate on which the demised premises were situated.

The Court of Appeal so held by a majority. Lord Justice Pill dissenting, in dismissing an appeal by the appellants, Robert Kevin Lovatt and Margaret Rose Lovatt, from a decision of Judge Corrie at Northampton County Court on October 21, 1996, upholding a decision of District Judge Whitehurst on September 21, 1996, giving possession of a council house 174 Gladstone Road, Spencer Estate, Northampton to the plaintiff landlords, Northampton Borough Council, within seven days.

Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985 provides:

"Grounds on which a court may order possession if it considers it reasonable ... Ground 2. The tenant or a person residing in the dwelling house has been guilty of conduct which is a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours ..."

Mr Derek Wood, QC and Mr Edmund Farrell for the appellants; Mr Paul Morgan, QC and Mr John Gibson for the council.

LORD JUSTICE HENRY said that the appellants lived with their seven children, the three eldest of whom were boys. From 1994 those boys, Robert then 17, Leroy 15 and Kelvin 13, were running wild on the estate, with behaviour which was criminal or anti-social or both. Essentially all of that behaviour was committed on the Spencer Estate but none was in Gladstone Road where they lived.

Against that background the council sought and obtained an order for possession primarily on the ground that the three boys, persons "residing in the dwelling house" had been guilty of "conduct which is a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours".

The essential issue for the court was whether conduct that had taken place away from the dwelling house could be relied on as a basis for an order for possession, and whether the victims of the conduct who lived on the estate, but not within 100 metres of the Lovatts were "neighbours" within

the meaning of the tenancy agreement and the 1985 Act.

Counsel for the appellants did not seek to challenge any of the findings of fact made by the district judge. The only challenge was that the judge was wrong in law in finding that the acts of nuisance and annoyance committed away from the demised premises were relevant nuisance and annoyance for the purposes of ground 2 in Schedule 2 to the 1985 Act.

The 1985 Act introduced the concept of "neighbours". On its introduction the editors of *Woodfall on Landlord and Tenant* commented:

"This ground is based on Case 2, Schedule 2 to the Rent Act 1977, but 'neighbours' has been substituted for 'adjoining occupiers' to avoid *arid disputes as to proximity*."

Mr Wood contended that the terms "neighbours" and "adjoining occupiers" were interchangeable but his Lordship did not agree.

"Neighbours" was the wider word and was clearly intended to cover all persons sufficiently close to the conduct complained of to be adversely affected by that conduct. In these days there was force in G.

K. Chester's observation: "Your next door neighbour ... is not a man; he is an environment."

Next Mr Wood submitted that the conduct complained of had to emanate from the demised premises. He pointed out that most nuisances consisted of unreasonable use by an occupier and so such a limitation should be read into the Act.

Again his Lordship did not agree. Even if the phrase "nuisance and annoyance" were used technically, and he did not think they were: see *Megarry on the Rent Acts* (eleventh edition (1988) p404) one did not have to occupy land to be liable for nuisance: see *Hall v Beckenham Corporation* (1994) 1 KB 710, 728 about flying noisy model aeroplanes in a public park.

There was no warrant for reading the first part of ground 2 as if after the word "conduct" the qualifying words "at the dwelling house" were read in. There would be no sense in a law which prevented you playing your music at maximum volume in the middle of the night from your home but permitted you to walk round your neighbourhood with your

"ghetto-blasters" at full pitch.

Mr Wood submitted that ground 2 concerned, whether found in private leases, or under the Rent Acts, or the Housing Acts were not intended to operate as instruments of social control entitling landlords, even local housing authorities, to evict tenants simply because they were in some way socially unacceptable.

His Lordship accepted that there must be a link between the behaviour of the tenants and their sons which constituted a nuisance or annoyance and the fact that they lived in the area.

That link was the legitimate interest that landlords had in requiring their tenants to respect the neighbourhood in which they lived and the quiet enjoyment of their homes by those who lived there.

Accordingly, the judge was right and the appeal should be dismissed.

LORD JUSTICE PILL delivered a dissenting judgment and **LORD JUSTICE CHADWICK** a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Toller Hales & Colcutt, Northampton; Mr Peter Newham, Northampton.

Scheme of arrangement not an order of the court

Kempe and Another v Ambassador Insurance Company (in liquidation)

Before Lord Steyn, Lord Hoffmann, Lord Cooke of Thorndon, Lord Saville and Mr Justice Gault

Judgment November 19

While a scheme of arrangement between a company and its creditors, under section 99 of the Companies Act 1985, corresponding to section 425 of the Companies Act 1985, required the approval of the court before it came into effect, it did not as a consequence become an order of the court and, therefore, the court had no jurisdiction subsequently to extend the time limits set by the scheme.

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council so held in allowing an appeal by Mr Charles W. Kempe Jr and Mr Nigel Hamilton, the joint liquidators of Mentor Insurance Ltd, from a decision of the Court of Appeal of Bermuda allowing an appeal by Ambassador Insurance Company, a company in liquidation, from an order of Mr Justice Gault striking out Ambassador's summons seeking an order that the time limit for appealing against the liquidators' rejection of part of its claim be extended.

Mr Robin Potts, QC and Mr P. A. Shandra, solicitor, for the liquidators; Mr Michael Crystal, QC, Mr Lloyd Tamlyn and Mr Andrew Martin, of the Bermuda Bar, for Ambassador.

LORD JUSTICE HOFFMANN, delivering the judgment of the Board, said that the Supreme Court of Western Australia in *Carroll v Hillman* (1974) WAR 92 had held that the court could extend any period prescribed by the scheme under its power to extend periods fixed by its orders. That case had since been followed at first instance in Australia: see *Bond v Metropolitan Hotel Ltd v State of Western Australia* (No 2) (1992) WAR 61.

Their Lordships respectfully disagreed with that decision. It was true that the sanction of the court was necessary for the scheme to become binding and that it took effect when the order expressing that sanction was delivered to the registrar. But that was not enough to enable one to say that the court, rather than the liquidators who proposed the scheme or the creditors who agreed to it, had by its order made the scheme.

Under section 99 it was for the liquidators to propose the scheme, for the creditors by the necessary majority to agree to it and for the court to sanction it. It was the statute which gave binding force to the scheme when there had been a combination of those three acts. It

was of course true that the sanction of the court was by no means a formality. Furthermore, in giving its sanction, the court had an inherent jurisdiction to correct any obvious mistakes in the document which set out the scheme. But it could not alter the substance of the scheme and impose upon the creditors an arrangement to which they did not agree.

The question of whether the time limits in the scheme were fixed or flexible was one of substance. Ambassador accepted that if there was jurisdiction to enlarge the period for filing an appeal against the rejection of a claim, there had also to be jurisdiction to extend the final filing date for filing the original claims.

But that would have been a material alteration detracting from the certainty and expedition which were the chief objects of the scheme. If creditors felt that in providing fixed time limits the scheme was creating traps into which the unwary might fall, the time to raise that question was when the scheme was under consideration or by way of objection when the court was asked to give its sanction.

Solicitors: Clifford Chance for Applicant; Spurling & Kempe, Bermuda; Frere Cholmeley Bischoff for Mello Hollis Jones & Martin, Bermuda.

Liability as constructive trustee

Brown and Another v Bennett and Others
Before Mr Justice Rafter

Judgment November 25

To hold someone liable as a constructive trustee under the "knowing assistance" limb of *Barnes v Addy* (1874) LR 9 Ch App 244, where there had been no breach of trust affecting property but merely a breach of a director's duty in relation to management of a company's affairs, would be an unwarranted extension of that authority.

Mr Justice Rafter so held in the Chancery Division, in striking so much of a statement of claim as affected the eleventh defendant, Oasis plc, but giving leave to the plaintiffs, Graham and Edwin Brown, to substitute a proposed for an existing statement of claim, subject to deletion therefrom of, inter alia, all reference to voluntary particulars and allegations of breach of fiduciary duty made against the seventh defendant, David Sarson.

The other principal defendants were: (1) and (2) Maurice and Michael Bennett, (4) Vivian Scott, a director of Pinecord Ltd since November 1990, (5) Peter Evans, (6)

Apex Partners and Company Ventures Ltd and (12) Pinecord Ltd (in liquidation).

The plaintiffs' case against the Bennetts was, in summary, that after they became de facto directors of Pinecord in February 1988 and shareholders of the company in August 1988, they followed a course of conduct in their management of it which was intended to put it into financial difficulty in order to enable them to increase their share of its equity as a condition of extracting it from such difficulty and/or to put it into receivership with a view to buying its business from the receiver for their own benefit.

On July 15, 1997 Mr Justice Rafter had refused the plaintiffs' application to substitute a new statement of claim inordinately excessive in length for a statement of claim together with an appendix, on the ground that it contained much recital of evidence, instead of a summary of material facts.

Mr David Oliver, QC and Mr Nicholas Asprey for the plaintiffs; Miss Barbara Dohmann, QC and Mr Robert Anderson for the first, second, fourth, fifth defendants and Oasis; Mr Richard

Slowe, solicitor, and Mr Neil Calver for the third and eighth to tenth defendants.

MR JUSTICE RAFTER said that the object of the action seemed to be to force Oasis to disgorge profits it had since made since it bought Pinecord's business from the receiver.

It now appeared that the offer for the company's business, eventually accepted by its receiver, had originally been put forward by the Bennetts and Mr Scott, who, on its acceptance subject to contract, had negotiated terms for a joint purchase with Tuncelass Ltd through the mediation of an off-the-shelf company, which was Oasis.

The Bennetts and Mr Scott became directors of Oasis on February 21, 1991. On March 7, 1991 (a) its initial shareholding of two £1 shares was increased thus: Tuncelass Ltd, 571,430; each of the Bennetts, 21,429 and Mr Scott, 142,857 shares; (b) Oasis contracted to buy the business.

Stock Exchange flotation of Oasis had ensued in June 1995, when it had come far from the alter ego of Pinecord. Mr Oliver had argued that Oasis had knowingly and dishonestly assisted the defen-

dant directors of Pinecord, being in effect trustees of its property for the benefit of its shareholders, in the Bennetts' and Mr Scott's design, so as to become a constructive trustee under the knowing assistance limb of *Barnes v Addy*.

But as appeared from *Royal Brunei Airlines Sdn Bhd* (1995) 2 AC 378, 382D liability as a constructive trustee for "knowing assistance" was "a form of secondary liability in the sense that it only arises where there has been a breach of trust".

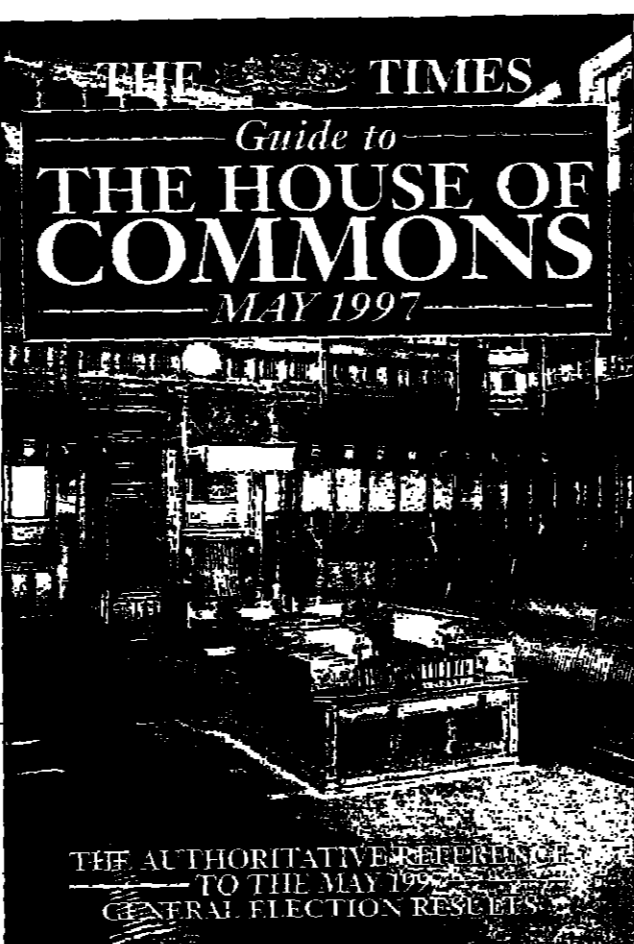
Here, it was impossible to contend that Oasis had had any connection with the defendant directors' alleged breaches of trust or the resultant damage to the company.

Mr Oliver had urged, assuming breaches of the directors' duties, that that was inequitable. Equity should require the recipient, Oasis, to disgorge subsequent profits but his Lordship saw no reason why the Bennetts should be entitled to profits subsequently achieved, in part, by Oasis with the help of Tuncelass Ltd.

Solicitors: Abrahamson & Associates; Berwin Leighton; S. J. Berwin.

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How to avoid a 'hammer horror'

Clare Stewart and Marianne Curphey offer some straightforward saleroom tips for would-be antiques collectors

Anyone who has watched the BBC's *Antiques Roadshow* will have experienced the vicarious thrill when someone clutching a piece of pottery bought for £5 from a car boot sale is told by the expert that the markings on the base indicate that the item is a genuine Ming vase.

Such lucky finds are rare, but buying antiques as a hobby is within the reach of the enthusiastic amateur. Choosing wisely can mean that by building up a collection to furnish your home you can also be making a shrewd investment. Though antiques are affected by fashion and may fall in value, over the long term they should provide some protection against inflation.

If you intend to sell off valuable antiques, or are thinking of investing large amounts of money in them, there may be tax implications. Clive Scott-Hopkins, a personal taxation specialist with Towry Law, says family antiques that you inherit could be subject to inheritance tax, which is payable on chattels or investments of £25,000 or more.

Mr Scott-Hopkins said: "Unless your antique is certified as a work of art, it will not be exempt from any inheritance tax assessment. To be certified as a work of art, you need to have the British Museum inspect it and declare it to be an article of national, historical or artistic importance. There are certain rules and conditions which accompany this certification, such as ensuring that there is public access at certain times so that people can view the item."

There may also be capital gains tax (CGT) to pay if you dispose of a valuable item. Each person has an annual CGT allowance of £6,500 and must pay tax on any gain made above this amount.

The art and antiques market can appear daunting to the uninitiated, not least because of the perception that auction salerooms are only for millionaires or that it is a market with more than its fair share of unscrupulous dealers.

There are two pieces of advice that apply whether you are a novice collector or a patron of the arts — buy the best you can afford because quality will always hold its value; and do not buy an item as a good investment, buy because you like it.

Before you embark on a collecting spree, read round your subject. Antiques magazines, price guides and sale catalogues from auction houses all contain useful information which helps to build your knowledge. In addition, visit museums and historic houses and talk to the auction house specialists. Some groups such as Christie's run study programmes and evening courses for buyers and collectors.

Many people begin collecting after inheriting or being given an antique that prompts them to find out more about the item. The more you explore a particular area of the market, the wider your knowledge will be, which might well lead you towards other areas of collection.

Trends in auction rooms prices at local and national level provide an indicator of demand and may also indicate a rising market where there are opportunities to buy while prices are still on the way up.

Phillips publishes an annual market survey and highlights areas to watch. In its 1997 review, available

from this month, the auction house points to strong demand fuelling prices in areas ranging from Art Deco furniture to jewellery and Impressionist paintings. There has been a "renewed sense of confidence in the art and antique market worldwide", says the auctioneer.

At Bonhams, Charles O'Brien, a 19th-century paintings specialist, reports strong prices for pictures. Those most in demand are signed pictures by known artists, and in good condition. Subject matter is also important, so pictures of children, albeit by a lesser-known artist, may fetch more than a painting of a historic scene.

When it comes to buying there are numerous antique fairs, as well as dealers and auction sales. Buying from a dealer who belongs to one of the main trade associations such as Bada, the British Association of Antique Dealers, or Lapada, the London and Provincial Antiques Dealers, provides reassurance to buyers. Dealers have to be vetted before becoming members, and they are also bound by a code of practice.

But if you buy from any dealer the same rights and regulations apply as when you buy from supermarkets or chainstores. If you want the best price you will have to bargain — a skill that comes with practice. Dealers will have a built-in profit margin, which they will not compromise, but they are often prepared to knock anything from £5 or £10 upwards off an item they have had in stock for a long time. According to the code of practice, items should be what they say they are. In the case of antiques, for example, they should not be modern reproductions or if described as unaltered, should not be found to be heavily restored. If there are discrepancies you are entitled to ask for a refund.

When buying from any dealer ask for a full written description of the item, and make sure that what is written down matches the description you may have been given. If, for example, you have been told that the piece is in good condition, does that mean it has been restored in any way, and is this in the written description?

The provenance of an item, that is to say what is known about its history and previous ownership, is particularly important and often adds to the value of a piece.

Buying at auction gives you an opportunity to view goods in advance, and study the details given in the sale catalogue. But study the terms of and conditions of the sale which will be detailed in the catalogue, as auction house are classified as wholesalers and are not bound by the same rules as retailers.

If you are interested in attending a sale, you need to register and will be allocated a buyer's number that you display to join the bidding. You do not have to pay to participate, nor are you likely to end up bidding thousands of pounds for a Louis XIV commode, simply because you sneeze during the bidding.

Do not forget that on top of the price of an item when the hammer falls, you will be charged a buyer's premium. For example, Phillips charges 15 per cent on the first £30,000 of the price. VAT may also be payable.



Peter Stuchlik, director of The Map House, Knightsbridge, Central London, with a Dutch map of Russia dating from the 1650s, which he says is a growing market

Now the new year is upon us, it is a good time to check that your antiques are properly insured for their replacement value. Seek a member of the British Antique Dealers Association, whose descriptions and valuations are respected by the insurance industry and may result in a discount on your contents cover.

While both quality oak and walnut furniture have risen markedly over the past 18 months, mahogany looks "very reasonable again, particularly George II and George III periods", says David Hansford, a specialist in period furniture and clocks based in Lincoln.

A walnut tallboy of 1700-1720 can command between £18,000 and £28,000 but a mahogany example from 1730-60 in rich colour is under half the price at £6,000 to £8,000. Satinwood is good value. Bonhams, the auctioneers, sold a Victorian satinwood work table in October for £1,700 plus the buyer's premium, up 10 per cent in five years. Possibly because this wood is more to American taste, a large demi-lune period pier table can be secured for around £10,000.

Long case clocks reflect the popularity of oak. A 1760 oak example now makes £3,000 to £3,500 but five years ago commanded £1,500 to £2,000. Mahogany 18th-century brass dial long-case clocks are tipped by Mr Hansford — up from £3,000 to £4,500 in the early 1990s to between £5,000 and £8,000. Pergoda-topped painted dials with moon decoration have jumped in price over the same period from between £1,800 and £2,200 to be-

Keep tabs on value of treasured possessions

tween £4,200 and £4,800 today. In good mid-Georgian polychrome ceramics, coloured scale blue Worcester is great value. An exquisitely painted cup and saucer depicting exotic birds now makes £300, down from £450 to £500 five years ago, according to one of the top dealers, William Buck of Steppes Hill Antiques of Siringbourne, Kent.

Bow and Derby figures — such as the shepherd in the season — have not increased in price for five years. A set from 1765-1780 is secured for £1,000, down from £1,500 to £1,800. Yet Liverpool and Lowestoft porcelain have risen in price, as have the simple early blue and white Worcester ware. For the Chelsea factory, only the rare top quality pieces are up in value.

On silver, late 18th-century coffee pots, candlesticks and three or four tea services are undervalued, probably because thieves find small silver items easier to transport and sell. Small antique silver articles have increased noticeably: nutmeg grater at £120 five years ago, now up to £800 to £1,100; wine funnels of 1775-1820 from £250-£350 to £650-£850; grape scissors from £250-£300 to £600-£800, and asparagus tongs from £250-£450 to £600. Scottish Provincial and York silver marks

have risen dramatically with an Inverness-marked toddy ladle up from £50 in the early 1990s to £250 plus today. Look for silver 19th-century visiting card cases embellished with castle scenes or other historical events. They have jumped from £500-£600 to £3,000 in just five years. Old Sheffield plate is a depressed market, except for fairly plain 18th-century examples. Caucasian and tribal rugs are great value currently, according to Andrew Middleton of Bonhams. Seek examples from 1850-80, before synthetic dyes and, if possible, even earlier. Hardwearing examples can be obtained for £1,500-plus, down from £2,000 five years ago.

same as a modern one, but are infinitely better value," he says. At the top of the range, a three-grip ring 1770 English decanter costs £300, which has doubled in price in five years.

Historic maps of Central Europe are undervalued, according to Peter Stuchlik of The Map House in London. Look for Blaeu's Bohemia (£500 to £600) and City Maps, such as 16th-century Prague by Braun & Hogenberg or Blaeu's Moscow. On British counties, Surrey, Essex and Middlesex are most sought-after. Least favoured are Rutland, Shropshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

In paintings, still life and genre subjects have risen substantially in price. In the former, work by Edward Ladell makes £50,000 plus, while E. H. Stanley's studies are rarely less than £10,000. In Victorian oils, James Stark's work is still rising. His small canvases of Windsor and East Anglia sell for £25,000 and larger ones for £70,000 to £80,000. John Berney Ladbroke is also tipped.

Antique decanters are much in demand, reports Mark West, a Wimbledon dealer, who sells 30 a week. "At £120 to £300, they cost the

design is also in demand. An angle-poise lamp by Gaetano Pesce, the international designer, from 1970 now makes over £20,000.

Books and photographs, particularly inscribed first editions, are greatly sought. However, avoid large print runs, such as for Enid Blyton. Original book illustrations are keenly followed with E. H. Shephard's work for *The House at Pooh Corner* making £67,500 in July. Chris Beetles, a London dealer, keeps such material and original cartoons.

Well-known personalities or events can add to value. Dr Crippen's American Waltham gilt metal pocket watch sold in April for £10,350 — a record for the maker. The saleroom price for a Rolex Explorer was broken in November when one used by Oliver Shephard in the 1978-82 Transglobe Expedition made £4,000.

Sporting memorabilia is on an upward curve. A Slazenger racket used by Fred Perry at Wimbledon sold in June for £23,000 — the record for a racket.

Most early dolls and teddy bears are fully priced with a fine Steiff bear from around 1905 now making £23,000. Instead, look for animation art. A clockwork Mickey Mouse motorcycle from 1930 sold in the summer for £51,000. Early comic books and games also appeal.

Finally, there are oriental ceramics and textiles. An Imperial yellow *kest jifu* (court robe) from the first half of the 19th century now realises more than £10,000.

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Britain's motor insurance industry has suffered during a period of heavy losses

Drivers face cost rise

Drivers will face higher premiums in the new year to make up for losses in the motor insurance industry. Car owners could pay up to 12 per cent extra for their motor cover as insurance companies enter a loss-making period that could last until 1999, according to Bacon & Woodrow, a firm of actuaries and consultants.

Two million motorists currently drive without insurance, and the AA says additional costs will increase the number of uninsured drivers. A spokeswoman for AA Insurance said: "There is a fear that more people will avoid paying for insurance, particularly those with points on their licence or who have claimed in the past."

Young motorists, city-dwellers and those with previous claims or convictions will be the hardest hit because insurers are likely to focus premium rises on high-risk drivers rather than impose them across the board.

Until mid-1996, consumers had benefited from unrealistically low premiums brought on by fierce competition within the motor insurance industry. However, as even the strongest companies struggle to make a profit, cheap insurance is no longer sustainable. A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers said: "There comes a point when it is no longer possible to reduce premiums. At the beginning of last year, analysts forecast there would be a premium

increase in 1997 and it didn't really happen. No one company wants to be the first to put its premiums up."

A dramatic rise in personal injury claims also contributed to losses. Serious-injury claims have increased by 50 per cent in the past two years as Britons have become more "litigation-conscious". Government plans to make insurers pay for NHS treatment of road accident victims next year will put further pressure on premiums.

Most companies will phase in the increase, rather than raise premiums overnight. Eagle Star, which insures one million private motorists, has been raising its premiums by about 1 per cent a month for the past six months and says that the rises are going to continue this year. The company expects an increase of about 9 or 10 per cent over the year, which means that average-risk drivers paying £280 a year would see the cost of their motor cover rise by £25.

Norwich Union has been raising its premiums for a year and it expects further rises of 5 to 8 per cent during the course of next year. Royal & SunAlliance has ruled out sudden changes. Having made a profit in 1997, Direct Line, the largest private motor insurer with 2.1 million policies, may be able to avoid raising premiums immediately.

SUSAN EMMETT

Nice returns, shame about the bonus

The life companies are about to begin declaring their annual bonuses on with-profits policies for 1997, a year in which the United Kingdom equity market has enjoyed a total return of more than 25 per cent.

This should be a cause for celebration. After all, life companies have few holdings in the Far East, where stock markets have taken a battering. Instead, they concentrate their investments in the United Kingdom and the United States, where shareholders have been rewarded with handsome returns.

But popping the champagne corks would be premature. Payouts from life companies have been falling since 1992 and, even though the United Kingdom market rose 11 per cent last year, actuaries saw fit to cut back the smoothed returns paid to policy-



COMMENT
MARIANNE CURPHEY
Personal Finance
Deputy Editor

yields from shares which have not been as high in the past five years as they were in the heady days of the 1980s. Unlike the last stock market boom, the 1990s have been characterised by low inflation and declining interest rates. Yields on investment have effectively been halved since then.

But this is no comfort to policyholders who are perplexed as to why their bonuses should fall after such a period of sustained stock market growth. The concept of smoothing returns is supposed to ensure that bonuses steer a steady course, and not an excuse for life companies to be either reckless or mean. Though actuarial prudence is a virtue, and insurers would be foolish to get back into the cycle of overpaying, a decision to cut rates this month would look difficult to defend.

holders. There is no guarantee that they will not do the same again this year. As we report on page 64, observers believe that, even after a successful year, life insurers may feel obliged to reduce payouts in order to claw back some of the overpayments of the 1980s.

Actuaries are not normally regarded as an excitable bunch, easily swayed by loads-a-money optimism. Critics of the insurers have suggested that some companies encouraged their reluctant

actuaries to distribute wads of cash in the 1980s to maintain their place at the top of the performance league tables. That generosity can have painful consequences.

The other excuse the life companies employed last year, when a number of the leading players including Standard Life, Friends Provident and General Accident cut some of their bonus rates, is that they do not look only at investment returns. They argue that they also look at dividend

Storm cover warning

The gale-force winds and driving rain lashing parts of the UK this weekend serve as a salutary reminder of the damage and problems that winter weather can bring. Thousands of people ran short of Christmas cheer when the lights went out as storms brought down power lines on Christmas Eve, with North Wales and the North West among the areas most affected.

Over the past few days high winds and rain have been making life unpleasant and the Meteorological Office says there is more to come over the weekend, particularly in southwest Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North West.

With many offices closed over the Christmas and New Year period, it is too early for insurance companies to have estimated the likely cost of claims arising from recent weather damage, although several large companies report that customer helplines have been busier than usual over Christmas.

"Several thousand claims have been reported," said Tony MacMahon, Royal & SunAlliance claims manager. In Manchester, one of the areas affected by Christmas storms, Guardian Royal Exchange is opening its office today in order to deal with the increased number of claims.

Many of the claims, say the insurance companies, are for relatively small amounts, to cover damage such as slates or tiles off a roof. Turkeys that

Home policies may not cover your gates and fences, says
Clare Stewart

went off because they could not be cooked or food in fridges and freezers that was lost because of power cuts are likely to be covered by most household contents policies, though some do limit cover on freezer contents.

Many insurance companies run helplines for policyholders, a number of which are open 24 hours a day to give advice on claims, as well as recommending suitable local firms to carry out emergency repairs.

While outhouses such as garden sheds, garages and greenhouses will usually be covered under your house's buildings cover, it is worth checking that the sum insured is adequate to cover replacement of some or perhaps all of these items should you be hit by particularly strong winds.

Fences, gates, hedges and trees are all vulnerable to wind damage but it is unlikely that your home policy will provide cover for storm damage. Royal & SunAlliance recommends that people prepare for storms by temporarily securing loose fence panels by either leaning

heavy objects against them or nailing them roughly into place.

Make sure that gutters are secured and that pipes and drains are kept clear of leaves and other debris. Floods and overflows can cause damage both outside and inside if the water drips down walls or floods basement and ground-floor rooms.

Insurance companies keep a sharp eye on weather patterns in order to be prepared for a rush of customer inquiries, and have specialist advisers on hand. Detailed weather information such as the Met Office provides with its GeoProof system, that gives a record of weather on a very localised basis, may also be used to validate claims.

It is often employed by insurers for cases where an isolated claim may be made from a policyholder in an area that has not been widely hit by problems, or where a claim comes in some time after the event.

When offices reopen after the holiday, insurance companies will start totting up the costs of the bad weather. While it may have meant an uncomfortable Christmas for some people, it is unlikely that the cost to insurance companies will be too painful. Householders who over the past year have enjoyed fairly stable premiums need not worry for now that insurance premiums will be raised sharply to pay for December's gales.



Householders should try to limit damage from storms

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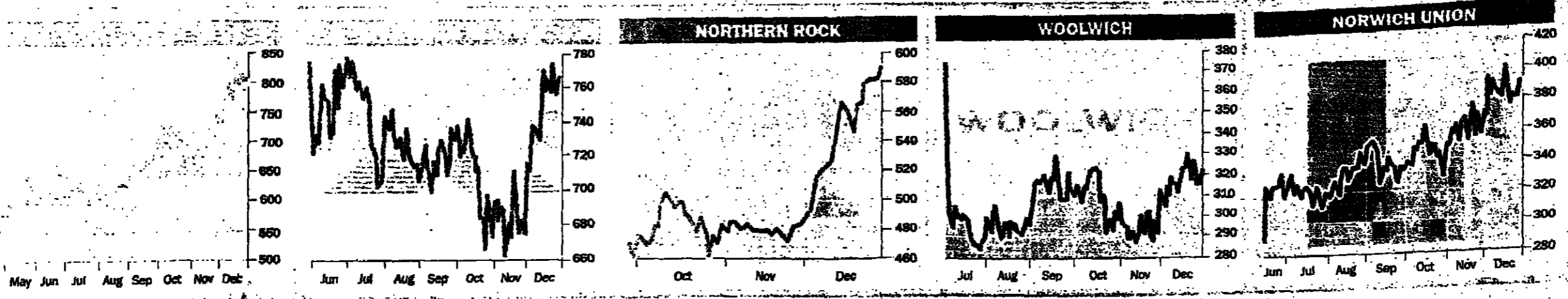
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Not so mutual mixed fortunes

Patrick Collinson on how those windfall shares fared and their prospects for 1998

Should you have held on to those windfall shares in 1997? Millions of Alliance & Leicester, Northern Rock and Norwich Union shareholders can raise a glass to the performance of their shares, but Halifax and Woolwich holders have had little to cheer about so far.

An estimated 20 million people shared in the £35 billion demutualisation bonanza during 1997, with typical share payouts worth £2,000-£2,500 per person. About one third of the windfall gainers have sold already, most through the auctions arranged by the companies just before the first day of trading. About two thirds of the shares in these companies are still held by the original investors, and one analyst at Merrill Lynch, the broker, says small investors have been far more canny than the market-makers expected.

By far the biggest surge has been at Alliance & Leicester. It kicked off trading on April 21 at 53p, but has since soared 56 per cent to a high of 831p on December 22. One quarter of A&L's members sold their allotment of 250 shares in the initial auction in mid-April, and received an average £1,334.25. Had they waited until Christmas, they would have been nearly £750 better off, when 250 shares were worth £2,077.50. Two thirds of the shares are still held by the original private investors, now showing a decent gain.

Last year was a phenomenal time for financial stocks. Banks and insurance companies were the darlings of the stock market as they cut costs by closing branches, shedding staff and generating large amounts of cash. Share prices also jumped as takeover fever gripped the market with talk of megadeals.

How did your windfall wind up in 1997? And what might happen to it in 1998? Weekend Money presents a guide to the five demutualising companies last year.

HALIFAX

Halifax has had a rocky ride on the stock market. It opened at 776.5p on June 2, almost twice the price predicted at the beginning of the year, and has never seen that price again. The stock dropped steadily over the months before hitting the bottom at 663p in mid-November. Since then, speculation that Halifax might launch a takeover bid for M&G, the unit trust manager, has helped the

stock to recover and it is now close to its original price. At the auction 23 per cent of the 7.6 million members sold their shares immediately, obtaining 732.5p per share. Since then Merrill Lynch, which acted for Halifax on the flotation, says private shareholders have been willing sellers above 750p but have found few takers, while the institutional buyers have but

found few sellers at around 700p. Few believe that the Halifax share price will itself benefit from takeover speculation.

WOOLWICH

When Woolwich joined the stock market on July 7 its shares were priced at 368.5p. By the end of the day, the stock had

already lost more than 30p and the decline continued. After dipping below £3 at the end of July, the Woolwich bumped along the bottom and now stands at around 315p. However, only a handful of Woolwich shareholders probably obtained the first-day selling price. One fifth sold out in the auction at 296.5p, so investors who held on to the shares have

neither gained nor lost much. The problem is not that Woolwich is a poor performer, but quite the reverse. It came to the market at an extremely high price, reflecting sentiment that it is a well-run company, with 6.7 per cent of the mortgage market. Merrill Lynch says investors' eyes will be on what the management says at the spring AGM,

when a possible share buyback announcement could boost the share price. Dresner Kleinwort Benson is recommending investors to reduce their holdings in Woolwich, in contrast to Halifax, Northern Rock and Alliance & Leicester, which it rates as "holds".

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER

The hottest gainer since launch, jumping by more than half in nine months. Yet it has few friends among the financial analysts. One said: "It's the stock I least like of the five. It has risen partly because it is a recovery story — it is seen as an inefficient company with loads of costs that could be cut out."

The price has also been driven up by takeover rumours. But another analyst said: "I am a bit sceptical of it as an acquisition target because it's not a clean buy. I rate it as no more than a hold in a sector I am generally positive on."

NORTHERN ROCK

Northern Rock opened at 470p on October 1, had a brief bout of the shakes, then began a steady climb upwards. It hit a high of 588.5p recently, a gain of 25 per cent. The rise has not been enjoyed by many shareholders, largely based in Northern Rock's Geordie heartland. More than four in ten sold out in the auction, reaping £2,260 compared with the £2,942.50 for 500 shares today.

Northern Rock is being tipped by many pundits as the share to buy in 1998 since the former building society has five years' protection from predators. Northern Rock chose to sell out, it would be for a substantial premium. "The clearing banks would love to get their hands on Northern Rock," said one analyst.

NORWICH UNION

Norwich Union shareholders have enjoyed strong gains since the insurance came to market on June 16 at a price of 290p. Takeover rumours have propelled the price to a high of 400p, a rise of 38 per cent. Even with a price tag of 29 billion-plus, it is not out of the reach of the shareholders of companies such as Halifax or Abbey National, which lost out in the bidding for the building society.

Jewelled endowment sparkles for a nurse

The £3 billion Norwich Union share bonanza put a sparkle into the life of Betty Cashman, a senior nurse from Reading, Berkshire, when her husband sold 200 of his shares to buy his wife some new jewellery (Patrick Collinson writes).

Gerard Cashman was allotted 700 Norwich Union shares because he was the holder of a Norwich Union mortgage endowment policy that he had taken out 15 years ago to repay the mortgage on his home.

"I saw it as a bit of free money, and that I'd spend some and save some. I check the newspapers every now and then to look at the share price and it has kept creeping up so I think I did the right thing to hold on to most of them. I'm glad I didn't spend it all on jewellery for Betty."

Mr Cashman's 500 free shares are now worth nearly £2,000, £500 more than if he had sold them in the auction in June. He does not hold any other shares but has got his fingers crossed for a windfall from Nationwide Building Society, which last year fought off a demutualisation attempt by carpetbaggers.

"I have some pension additional voluntary contributions with the Nationwide Building Society and I'd be surprised if the society does not demutualise at some time over the next couple of years. I just hope it's before I retire," added Mr Cashman.



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Love them or hate them — banks do give rich returns

Banks, the institutions we most love to hate, turned out to be one of the more profitable investments of 1997. Discerning investors who chose to avoid a bank's deposit account and bought its stock reaped handsome rewards.

The value of the banking sector increased by an estimated 39 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in the FTSE 100 index. Only gas distribution, life assurance and pharmaceuticals grew faster.

Few professional investors have been surprised by the performance of banking stocks over the past 12 months, given the robust state of the British economy. Steady economic growth, coupled with low rates of inflation and a sustained recovery in the housing market, combined to make the ideal environment.

Add to this a wave of consolidation in global financial services, and it is little wonder that many banks' shares have been trading at a premium virtually all year. Continued speculation in the City about mergers and acquisitions has helped prop up prices, even when the economic fundamentals appear not to merit such values.

Of course, not all banks did equally well. Three of the Big Four feature among the country's top 11 performing companies, but pole position goes to a much smaller rival: Bank of Scotland. Its shareholders saw their investments nearly double in value (up 87 per cent), according to a market survey by Datastream and ICV, providers of financial data. Only Nyscomed Amersham among the FTSE 100 companies outperformed Bank of Scotland.

In fifth position is Lloyds TSB, once the smallest of the Big Four but now their undisputed leader. Its stock increased by 71 per cent. Barclays holds seventh place with a return of 60 per cent, while NatWest ranks 11th with a growth rate of 48 per cent. Midland, the other Big Four bank, fared less well because its parent, HSBC Holdings, has a large exposure to the financial crisis in South East Asia. Shares in

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THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 3 1998

With the sales season in full swing, Susan Emmett tests the best rates for credit cards and personal loans

Paying the price for sales madness season

Britain's retailers may be anticipating good news in the new year sales as bargain hunters clear the shelves but shoppers themselves could be left with an empty bank balance.

After a difficult month's trading in December, some confidence has returned to the high street. However, those shoppers who have already blown all their cash on the festivities, and those who plan to make the most of the big stores' discounts could be facing a cashflow problem.

Those with some foresight might have asked their banks for an overdraft over the Christmas period. But for most, Christmas shopping means flexing your flexible friend to the limit. The Credit Card Research Group estimate we will have spent £5.5 billion on our credit cards in December. And one in seven will still be paying off their credit card debts in June, according to a survey by the People's Bank, Connecticut. Most people do however, pay within 60 days.

new product to avoid the embarrassment Tesco faced when it was unable to cope with the overwhelming demand for its high-interest savings account.

About 10,000 non-customers have expressed interest in Virgin One since it became available to existing customers in November and will be contacted individually. For the chosen few, sorting out Christmas debts will be rather different from usual.

As Virgin One combines a mortgage and a current account, Virgin Direct says it offers a simpler way of consolidating all your debts.

All borrowing and saving will be at Virgin's mortgage rate of 8.2 per cent rather than the higher rates charged by credit card or even the best personal loan deals. Virgin Direct estimates that someone with an annual income of £30,000 and a mortgage of £65,000 who has accumulated credit card debts worth £1,250 and taken out a personal loan of £1,500 can save over £600 a year with Virgin One.

pay before the end of the interest-free period which can be up to 56 days. Any balance left over after the interest-free period will grow by between 10 and 25 per cent APR.

However, with stiff competition in the market, a growing number of card providers are offering very attractive rates. Many of these are designed to attract a transfer of debts with added incentives such as very low initial rates and no fee. The best credit card deal on offer according to Moneyfacts is the Co-operative Bank Advantage Visa which charges 7.9 per cent APR. But there is no interest-free period and the honeymoon ends in March but the rate still remains low at 10.9 APR. Capital One Bank MasterCard/Visa offers the same competitive rate to start with and has the advantage of a 54-day interest-free period. But the rate more than doubles in July when it rises to 17.9 per cent APR. RSB Avanta Visa has an interest-free period of 56 days and a starting rate of 9.9 per cent APR which lasts until July when it goes up to 18.1 per cent APR.

it and then repay the credit card, which means you'll make some savings on interest. Alternatively, if you can't repay your credit in cash, think about transferring the balance to an overdraft or personal loan.

Overdrafts and personal loans

If the interest on your overdraft is less than the rate on your credit card, you could use it to pay off your card. But there is no point having both a credit card debt and an overdraft. Unauthorised overdrafts have punitive interest rates and being charged for a rude letter from your bank manager will not help your Christmas hangover.

A personal loan will usually work out cheaper than an overdraft and will give you longer to pay off your debts. Most personal loans have a fixed repayment period. You will have to pay some cash back each month over an agreed period which could last up to five years. Direct Line provides unsecured loans to over-22-year-olds at a rate of 12.8 per cent APR. A fixed monthly payment on a loan of £5,000 during three years is £183.75 with insurance. Capital One Direct charges 12.9 per cent APR for a similar loan as does the Bank of Scotland (Banking Direct). When taking out a personal loan, bear in mind that you may have to pay arrangement fees and take out payment protection insurance.

One-stop borrowing

Virgin Direct has postponed the full-scale advertising blitz for its new One account until later this year, preferring to roll it out quietly for the initial few months. However, from January 16 it will be offered to anyone who applies for it.

The financial services arm of Richard Branson's empire, decided to delay advertising its

Credit cards

Credit card debts are cumulative. Not only are you paying interest on the actual purchase, you are paying interest on the interest until the debt is paid off. So the longer you have a credit card debt, the more expensive it becomes.

Credit card borrowing is designed for short-term borrowing and it is advisable to

Storecards

These charge even higher rates if you do not repay the full amount on demand. Some card charge up to 30 per cent APR. Fiona Price, managing director at Fiona Price and Partners said: "One possibility if you have a credit card with a lower rate of interest, is to pay off the store card balance with

SHOP AROUND FOR COMPETITIVE BORROWING RATES					
MONEYFACTS CARD SELECTION		RATE PM	APR	INTEREST FREE PERIOD	FEE
CO-OPERATIVE BANK after 31.3.98 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64 per cent 0.87 per cent	7.9 per cent 10.9 per cent	0 days	nil
	Mastercard/Visa	0.64 per cent 1.38 per cent	7.9 per cent 17.9 per cent	54 days	nil
CAPITAL ONE BANK after July 1998 0800 669000	Mastercard/Visa	0.79 per cent 1.40 per cent	9.9 per cent 18.10 per cent	56 days	nil
	Visa	0.79 per cent 1.40 per cent	9.9 per cent 18.10 per cent	56 days	nil
RSB ADVANTA after 1.7.98 0800 077770	Visa	0.935 per cent 1.67 per cent	12.90 per cent 23.20 per cent	56 days	£10
	Visa/Worldwide Mastercard	0.935 per cent 1.67 per cent	12.90 per cent 23.20 per cent	56 days	£10
RS OF SCOTLAND after first 12 months 0541 541800	Mastercard/Visa	0.945 per cent 1.545 per cent	11.9 per cent 21.6 per cent	56 days	nil £12
	Mastercard/Visa	1 per cent	14 per cent	56 days	£12
ROBERT FLEMING/S&P 0800 829100	Mastercard/Visa	1.02 per cent 1.60 per cent	12.90 per cent 20.90 per cent	52 days	nil
	Mastercard/Visa	1.02 per cent 1.60 per cent	12.90 per cent 20.90 per cent	52 days	nil
G&P BANK after 12 months 0800 425566	Base rate linked Mastercard	1.02 per cent	13 per cent	0 days	nil
	Base rate linked Mastercard	1.02 per cent	13 per cent	0 days	nil
ROBERT FLEMING/S&P 0800 829100	Mastercard/Visa	1.17 per cent	16.10 per cent	50 days	£11
	Mastercard/Visa	1.17 per cent	16.10 per cent	50 days	£11
FRIZZELL BANK 0800 373191	Mastercard	1.21 per cent	15.50 per cent	0 days	nil
	Mastercard	1.21 per cent	15.50 per cent	0 days	nil
RS OF SCOTLAND (we 1.1.98) 0800 161616	Mastercard	1.21 per cent	15.50 per cent	0 days	nil
	Mastercard	1.21 per cent	15.50 per cent	0 days	nil

Figures compiled on: 23 December 1997

MONEYFACTS PERSONAL LOAN SELECTION (unsecured loan)		APR	WITH INSURANCE (Fixed monthly payment on £5,000 for 3 years)	WITHOUT INSURANCE
DIRECT LINE (Minimum age 22 years) 0181 680 9966		12.8 per cent	£183.75	£166.38
CAPITAL ONE DIRECT 0800 216252		12.9 per cent	£189.48	£166.54
BANK OF SCOTLAND (DIRECT) 0800 805805		12.9 per cent	£191.55	£166.60
ALLIANCE & LEICESTER 0990 626262		13.3 per cent	£187.73	£167.56
NATIONWIDE BS via local branch		14.9 per cent	£186.50	£170.80



Play your cards right: it is worth shopping around for the best credit rates as well as bargains

In the July Budget, the Chancellor announced that tax exempt savings schemes will change in April 1998. As a result you may not be able to continue to enjoy the current tax benefits offered by ISAs. However, the Government has announced that a new tax privileged vehicle is to be introduced - the Individual Savings Account, or ISA, for short. Full details have yet to be confirmed and we are currently in discussion with the Government as to the future implications for PEPs. The price of investments and the income from them can go down as well as up, you may not get back as much as you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. M&G is not offering advice or making any recommendations regarding investment - we only promote the packaged products and services of the M&G marketing group, owned by M&G Financial Services Limited (regulated by The Personal Investment Authority). Registered Address: M&G House, Victoria Road, Chesham, Bucks HP8 4JF. Registered No: 928891.

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THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 3 1998

John Givens continues our series offering advice for those interested in entering self-employment

It pays to know the ins and outs

If your new business is expected to turn over more than £49,000 a year you are obliged by law to register with the VAT office when you begin trading. This means that you will have to add the rate of value added tax — currently 17.5 per cent — to all of the invoices you send out to customers.

Although £49,000 might seem like a large amount, especially if you are setting up a small business, the figure relates to total annual sales rather than profit. Therefore you will have to work out how much you expect to sell in your first trading year and not just how much you will make after all costs.

Here Weekend Money outlines your responsibilities regarding VAT and how to meet them.

REGISTERING

Contact your local VAT office and ask for a registration pack, which includes some simple forms to fill in and return. You will also be issued with a VAT number, which you should quote on your invoices when you bill customers.

VAT offices have inquiry lines enabling you to ask for help over the telephone with any queries you may have. Your local office is listed in the telephone directory.

If you start your business believing that you will not exceed the £49,000 compulsory registration threshold but subsequently realise that you will turn over at least that amount, you must tell the VAT authorities immediately and become VAT registered. If you fail to do so you will be liable to pay a fine.

Even if your business does not have turnover of more than £49,000 a year you can still register for VAT. The benefit of this is that you can reclaim VAT you pay when



you buy goods and services from suppliers — money which otherwise would be lost.

However, the downside is that if you are selling mainly to people who are not VAT registered, and therefore cannot reclaim the VAT you charge them, the price of your own goods or services will be more expensive to the customer and may put them off buying from you.

COLLECTING

If you are VAT registered, every invoice you send out must include VAT shown as a separate amount. This means that a £100 invoice will show £17.50 VAT, with the total amount payable by the customer being £117.50.

When the invoice is paid the £17.50 VAT element is technically the property of the Customs and Excise office. Although it might be a few months before you have to hand it over, it is wise to keep it safe, possibly in a separate bank account, so that when you come to pay your VAT liabilities you have the money available.

PAYMENT

When you buy goods and services to be used for your normal business you will pay VAT. If you are registered you can claim this back on your VAT return.

Most things you buy will include VAT at the current rate of 17.5 per cent, although certain items are exempt, such as children's clothes, food and books. You can also claim back

VAT paid on any capital items bought in the three years before registration that you now use for your business. You can also claim back any VAT charged on services used in the six months prior to registration.

VAT RETURN

Most businesses have their VAT year split into four quarters. At the end of each quarter you must file a VAT return, and you have one month from the end of the period to make sure the forms reach the Customs and Excise office.

Your VAT return can do one of two things — either show how much you owe and enclose a cheque for the amount, or indicate that you have paid out more VAT to suppliers during the quarter than you have charged customers.

which means you are due a refund from the VAT office. If your VAT return arrives late you will be issued with a default notice. If you infringe the timescales again in the same financial year you will be liable to pay a fine, which could be anything between 2 per cent and 15 per cent of the amount of VAT you owe.

The VAT office also has to play by the rules and pays refunds within one month of receiving your return.

CASH

Cash accounting is designed to help companies which might suffer from cashflow problems because they have to pay a hefty VAT bill before their invoices have been paid by customers. To get around this problem a small company can send a customer a form requesting payment for a sale rather than a normal invoice.

The request for payment will still include VAT but is not judged to be a VAT invoice by the Customs and Excise office. When payment is received you then send out the VAT invoice to the customer, and at this

point the extra 17.5 per cent is judged to be payable in your next scheduled VAT return. To balance things up you cannot reclaim any VAT charged by your suppliers on their invoices until you have actually paid their bill.

ZERO-RATING

Some companies are classed as zero-rated concerns where there is no VAT payable on the goods or services they supply, which means they are not collecting VAT to pass on to the authorities. However, these types of business still need to fill in a VAT return because they will want to reclaim VAT that they have paid out to suppliers.

PETROL COSTS

VAT is payable on petrol and diesel, and if you use a vehicle as part of your business you are entitled to claim back the VAT element. However, it is almost impossible for the VAT office to know exactly how much petrol each quarter has been used for business purposes and how much has been

for private use, on which you are not allowed to reclaim VAT.

To simplify things, the Customs and Excise office uses a formula whereby each quarter you pay a fixed sum and then claim back all the VAT you have paid on petrol during the period, irrespective of whether the fuel has been used for business or for personal matters. On a car with a 1600cc engine this amount is £37.53 for petrol vehicles and £27.55 for diesel.

In the above example, if you are spending more than £252 a quarter on petrol, it is worthwhile paying the fixed amount to the VAT office and then reclaiming all the tax which has been added to your petrol bill during the period.

HELP

Your local VAT office will give basic advice, but if you have major problems filling in your VAT return it would be wise to consult an accountant. An accountant might be able to save you the fines which the VAT office imposes on companies that file returns late.

YOU AND YOUR VAT

If your company turns over more than £49,000 in a financial year you must register for VAT.

If your turnover is less than this you can still register voluntarily although you should think carefully because people buying your goods or services who are not VAT registered, and therefore cannot claim the VAT back, are likely to find you more expensive than your competitors.

Remember to include your VAT number on all your invoices and to make sure that, every time you bill a customer, you show the VAT amount — 17.5 per cent — as a separate amount.

Do not be late filing your VAT return — you have one month from the end of the period to send in the forms. If you are late you will find Customs and Excise will hit you with penalties and will keep an eye on you in the future.

You must keep full records so that if the VAT office wants to inspect your company it can do so quickly and easily.

False VAT claims and VAT avoidance can land you in big trouble, perhaps even behind bars.

If you are concerned about having to pay VAT bills before your customers pay you, ask about cash accounting where you do not need to pay the VAT man until your own invoices have been settled.

If you have paid more VAT than you have collected during a quarter get your return in as soon as you can because the VAT office will refund you within one month.

If you cannot cover your VAT bill contact your local Customs and Excise office and discuss your problems with an official. Although it will not waive any of its demands, it might help you in other ways, such as giving more time to pay.

If you are in any doubt about your obligations to the VAT office ask an accountant for help. It might cost you a few hundred pounds but it could also save you a lot of trouble and possible fines if you do things wrong.

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*All figures are based on buying to selling price with net income reinvested over 5 years to 22.12.97. Source: Microcap. The value of investments, and any income from them, can fall as well as rise and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax concessions are not guaranteed; their value will depend on individual circumstances. Exchange rates may also affect performance. Past performance is not a guide to future returns. It was announced in the 1997 budget that from 8th April 1998 the income tax credit will no longer be reclaimable in a PEP and that other tax benefits may change with the planned introduction of a new individual savings account. Save & Prosper Group is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO. We only advise on products and services offered by the Flemings and Save & Prosper Marketing Group. 1930/003



Tim James has found the VAT office easy to deal with

SI Group does not foot the bill

Tim James's publishing company has a rare relationship with the VAT man — it does not have to collect value-added tax and pass it on to the Customs and Excise office.

His company is the SI Group. Based in London, it was launched in February this year and produces two monthly subscription newsletters for people who invest in football — Soccer Analyst and Soccer Investor.

However, because there is no VAT payable on books, magazines and newspapers, Tim does not have to worry about sending a cheque to the VAT office every three months. Instead the SI Group is classed as a net claimer and each month sends a VAT return to the Customs

and Excise office, claiming back all the VAT it has paid to its suppliers.

Tim, 43, says he has always found the VAT office easy to deal with. He says: "Although we do not charge VAT, we do pay quite a lot out each month on costs like telephone bills, freelance writers and designers, travel and hotels."

"To help our cashflow we claim the VAT back every month, which could be as much as £2,000."

"I have never had any problems with the VAT office and the money usually arrives in our bank account a couple of weeks after the VAT return has been sent off."

JOHN GIVENS

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Adviser offers tips on taxation of tips

Hotellers and restaurateurs are being warned by Grant Thornton, the financial advisers...

According to Grant Thornton, many organisations have been caught out and face stiff penalties as a result of ignoring the tax implications on tips...

Barclayloan's January sale will run until the end of this month. All loans between £500 and £15,000 taken out during this time will be available at a reduced rate and fixed for the entire duration of the loan...

SAVERS' BEST BOYS

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Instant Access Accounts like Woolwich 0800 222200.

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes Notice Accounts & Bonds like Bristol & West 0800 22121.

Table with columns: Account, Notice of term, Deposit, Rate, Interest paid. Includes First Tessa's (Tax Free) like Melton Mowbray BS 0800 7317385.

Table with columns: Card type, Interest per month, APR%, Fee per annum. Includes Credit Cards like Capital One Bank 0800 669000.

Table with columns: Personal Loans, APR, Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs. Includes Personal Loans like Direct Line 0181 680 9966.

NOTE: A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = No interest free period, F = Fixed Rate (at other rates variable), N = Introductory rates for a limited period, OM = Interest paid on maturity, P = By Post only.

Table with columns: Fixed Rate, Gross coupon, Buying price, Gross yield, Issue amount, Minimum purchase amount. Includes Fixed Rate like Birmingham Midshires 9.375%.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies like Building Societies 5.39 £20-150k.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies like Building Societies 0.75 £25-150k.

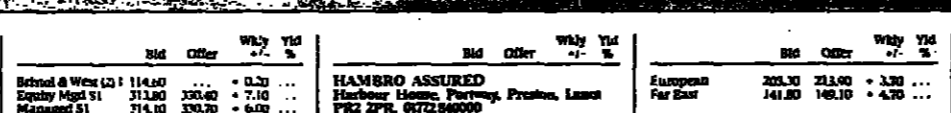


Table with columns: Bid, Offer, Why bid, Why offer. Includes AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE.

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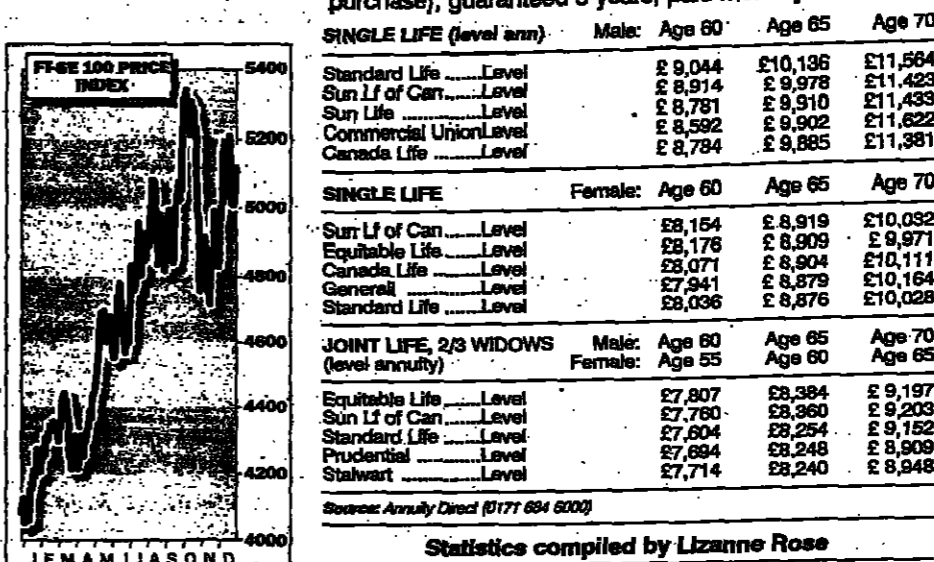
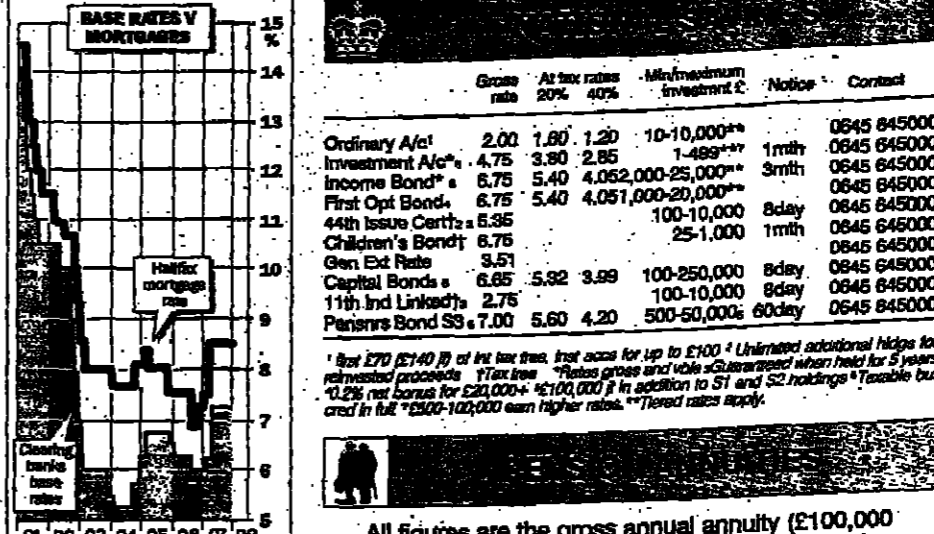


Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies like Building Societies 4.85 £30-100k.

Table with columns: Lender, Interest rate, Loan size, Max %, Notes. Includes Building Societies like Building Societies 0.75 £25-150k.

Table with columns: Bid, Offer, Why bid, Why offer. Includes ALIBY LIFE.

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THE TIMES THE SUCCESS STORY OF THE NINETIES CAN YOU ALWAYS GET YOUR COPY? Dear Newspaper, please deliver/save me a copy of THE TIMES. Includes name and address fields.

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Mixed reactions to the Isa proposals

From Mr David Alderson
Sir, May I seek to balance the argument hijacked by those with £50,000 or more invested in Tessa and/or Peps.

My wife and I were pleased last year to be able to collect some £3,000 saved in a Tessa over the previous five years. We would certainly consider ourselves "well off" if we were able to look on savings of £50,000 or a tenth of that.

Your weekly financial columns are not looking for the modest monthly saver for whom John Major as Chancellor of the Exchequer established them. Indeed this year we had some trouble finding a building society prepared to offer a Tessa with a modest (to them, not us) £50 per month. It has long been acknowledged that Tessa has not been attracting new savings but have been attracting money that is in the system anyway and looking for its most advantageous resting place. Peps are, and have always really been, for fatter cats than us. And those who have been in the happy position of being able to take on Pep mortgages are, among those who are already enjoying the benefits of low marginal rates of tax.

Pep-holders have benefited greatly (especially since May 1) from the increase in equity values. It is not so long ago that your columns were full of complaints from them regarding their investments. Now they complain the tax concessions should be eroded. I am sure they know at least as well as we that Peps were introduced as a gimmick to encourage savings to help us out of the recession. Whether

there is any cause and effect is doubtful but the substratum exists hence they should, quite properly, go. After all, when the basis for relieving profit-related pay went I do not remember the concerted beating from the haves.

The Government is to be congratulated on its initiative through I regret the inclusion of the lottery gimmick. I cannot help but think that this proposition would have enjoyed a much fairer wind but for its presentation by the unfortunate Geoffrey Robinson. I say "unfortunate" not to take any particular side but because the hounding he has received from the media — *The Times* included — will militate against encouraging people of his knowledge, skill and experience participating in government.

Commentators and the media have long bemoaned the dominance in Parliament of party apparatchiks. Truly carrying on like this we will end up with the government we deserve, having recently been delivered from one such. Yours faithfully,
DAVID ALDERSON,
3 Creswell Grove,
Stafford.

From Mr J. G. Campbell
Sir, Gordon Sives (Punitive Isa proposals) prompt fears for retirement income. *Weekend Money Letters*, December 13 expresses concern on the punitive effect of the Isa proposals on thrifty pensioners.

Sadly he and I and others like us need to be worried also about other hinted proposals, which apparently... just happen to persecute thrifty pensioners. These are:

1. Removal of tax allowance on private health insurance already enacted.
2. Reduction of net income from dividends via removal of ACT and tax credit and complicated proposed replacement.
3. Means-testing of free pre-giving for the elderly.
4. Means-testing of the state pension to which most of us contributed fully over lifetimes of upwards of 40 years.
5. Removal of wives' tax allowance.
6. Reduction or removal of married man's tax allowance.
7. Extra income tax for Scottish pensioners.

Most of the foregoing are said to aim at reducing the cost of welfare by driving people into work. I had not realised there are job opportunities awaiting people myself at 77 and served by an hourly bus service.

Yours faithfully,
J. CAMPBELL,
6a Lennox Court,
18 Stockiemuir Avenue,
Bearsden, Glasgow.

From Mr P. G. Ashford
Sir, One aspect of the present Isa controversy seems not to have been discussed: the legality of overt theft by government.

Notwithstanding an intention to set a lifetime ceiling on Isa contribution value the fact is that the UK government at an earlier time has already exempted from all future taxation investment growth and withdrawals in respect of all existing Pep and Tessa investments. Such existing investments at whatever their accruing value cannot in a civilised situation now be subject to taxation. If it really is an entitlement of the current

Government to back by tax changes any part of this investment already given fully free of tax then it constitutes blatant theft.

It is proper to amend tax rules unfavourably in respect of future investment and it may be commendable to allow future relief more beneficial to the poor than the rich but it is grossly wrong to take back what has already been given.

The government of the day can probably do whatever it likes but if its options include theft then something needs to be done to curb this option, if necessary by complaint to the European Court.

If, in the final outcome, government theft is not stoppable then it behoves the press to expose our current Government persistently for dishonesty and to encourage the black economy and all forms of tax evasion. Certainly an undesirable prospect but dishonesty of the people must be legitimate in competition with dishonesty of its government.

Yours faithfully,
P. ASHFORD,
54 Aldershot Road,
Fleet, Hampshire.

From Mr D. Dixon
Sir, I retired at the age of 58 with systemic sclerosis and my wife retired after 25 years as a primary school teacher. My wife receives her state pension and a small pension from the Teachers' Pension Agency. I receive no state pension, just a small reduced pension from my ex-employer.

Because we realised that our pensions would not be adequate, we lived frugally, saved our money over the past few years while we were employed

and invested it in Peps and Tessa to provide for the future and avoid being a burden on the State. This we did in accordance with the law and the tax regulations.

It would now appear that the Government is contemplating abolishing Peps and Tessa and taxing all investments above £50,000 (the maximum that can be transferred into the new Isas). One is hardly going to generate a massive income on £50,000 (with a current FTSE yield of 3.24 per cent it only equates to £1,620 per annum before tax). And because of inflation there is no point in investing in building society deposits, especially as we may have to live off our investments over the next 20 years or so.

It seems to me that this is retrospective legislation. We acted as responsible and prudent citizens and saved our money in good faith. Now the Government seems to be moving the goal posts. Even if we invest in the new Isas we can no longer be sure that the rules will not be changed again. This just encourages fecklessness, irresponsibility and improvidence.

Surely it is essential if the population is to make adequate provision for its old age, in accordance with the Government's wishes, it must be able to plan its finances and investments on a long-term basis. We should, therefore like to support *The Times* campaign in the hope of getting the proposals changed.

Yours faithfully,
D. DIXON,
33 Greenways,
Highcliffe,
Christchurch, Dorset.

Link plea to save rural post offices



From Mr D. Freeborough
Sir, In the last seven years Britain has lost more than one fifth of its bank branches and large numbers of people in rural and inner city areas have been left without basic financial services.

In today's competitive retail banking environment banks are unwilling to subsidise a branch which is unprofitable. However, they may be persuaded to pool resources with other banks

and organisations in these areas.

Alliance & Leicester allows customers to pay in cheques, cash cheques and pay bills free of charge at any post office. Co-operative Bank and Lloyds TSB have carried out trials of a similar service. This facility combined with Link/Delta cash/debit card, postal banking and telephone banking provides the full complement of banking services.

If more banks were to reach agreements with Post Office Counters, Barclays, Lloyds and Midland were to join Link and more post offices were to install Link cash machines then we would not need rural and inner city bank branches and we might keep our rural and inner city post offices. Yours faithfully,
DAVID FREEBOROUGH,
17 The Haven,
Fulbourn, Cambridge.

Service widows wait and wait

From Mr David Welsh
Sir, Last year Anne Ashworth highlighted the parlous state of the widows of officers who retired from HM Forces before 1974. These, unfortunate ladies in their later years find that their service pension is reduced by a crushing 70 per cent. Widows whose husbands served after 1974 receive 50 per cent of his pension.

Representation to previous governments to equalise pensions at the 50 per cent level have been stonewalled repeatedly by the statement that Service pensions cannot be increased retrospectively. This appears to be set in concrete. At the end of the last Parliament we saw MPs approve a hefty retrospective rise in their pensions and currently large sums of money are devoted to various causes of which the refurbishment of the Lord Chancellor's residence and the millennium come to mind.

As one who retired before 1974 I ask how much longer must we wait for the Government's mandate quoting Mr Blair's earlier statement — "to make fair what is unjust" — to be implemented? Will this caring Government make good the inequality of these pensions or wait quietly until we are wiped out by the passage of time? Yours faithfully,
DAVID WELSH,
Plough House, Orchard Road,
Fiskerton, Lincoln.



Kate Bartholomew, whose lack of a service pension because of the 1974 rule was highlighted in *Weekend Money* last April.

Bank delays 'inexcusable'

From Mr R. Morsley Smith
Sir, Gavin Lumsden ("The £1 million a day reason cheques take so long", November 15) rightly identifies the banks' vested interest in slow clearing of cheques. An excellent and cheap alternative to special presentation, with a cheque drawn on a bank not too far away, is to go and pay it in over the counter with a bank giro credit slip addressed to one's own bankers. They can telephone for advice of late after 3.30pm that day. It is

thus quickly clear whether the cheque is paid, while the money arrives a couple of days later. I used this method when selling a car, and it worked well, though I had difficulty making the cashiers in my bank understand what to do.

The Chaps system for same-day transfer at a cost of £20 has a vital limitation, again maximising the banks' profits. The funds arrive too late for onward transmission the same day by Chaps again. Last June, funds entering my

account ex-building society on Wednesday for property purchase could not reach my solicitor until Thursday. Similarly she was unable to transmit them to the vendor's solicitor until Friday. This infuriating delay occurs, I believe, with every Chaps payment. In an age of electronics it is inexcusable. Yours faithfully,
R. MORSLEY SMITH,
Orchard House,
Tower Hill Road,
Crewkerne, Somerset.

CGT ALLOWANCES - NOVEMBER 1997

The indexed rise for calculating the indexation allowance on assets disposed of in November 1997

Month purchased	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
January	-	0.932	0.838	0.750	0.658	0.566	0.545	0.438
February	-	0.924	0.830	0.736	0.642	0.550	0.529	0.428
March	1.008	0.920	0.824	0.720	0.650	0.588	0.538	0.421
April	0.989	0.894	0.800	0.694	0.624	0.568	0.509	0.396
May	0.955	0.866	0.794	0.676	0.631	0.568	0.503	0.388
June	0.950	0.861	0.789	0.673	0.632	0.566	0.497	0.383
July	0.949	0.871	0.781	0.676	0.637	0.568	0.499	0.382
August	0.949	0.863	0.775	0.671	0.632	0.568	0.479	0.378
September	0.950	0.865	0.771	0.672	0.624	0.559	0.472	0.369
October	0.940	0.848	0.760	0.670	0.621	0.551	0.458	0.358
November	0.931	0.842	0.755	0.664	0.607	0.544	0.451	0.347
December	0.934	0.837	0.756	0.662	0.602	0.545	0.447	0.343
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
January	0.336	0.226	0.177	0.157	0.130	0.093	0.063	0.034
February	0.328	0.219	0.171	0.150	0.123	0.086	0.056	0.030
March	0.315	0.215	0.168	0.148	0.120	0.082	0.053	0.027
April	0.278	0.199	0.150	0.136	0.107	0.071	0.044	0.017
May	0.285	0.196	0.146	0.131	0.103	0.065	0.043	0.013
June	0.290	0.190	0.146	0.131	0.103	0.070	0.047	0.013
July	0.299	0.193	0.146	0.130	0.103	0.065	0.042	0.007
August	0.246	0.190	0.149	0.130	0.103	0.065	0.042	0.002
September	0.234	0.186	0.145	0.125	0.101	0.060	0.038	0.002
October	0.225	0.181	0.141	0.128	0.099	0.065	0.038	0.001
November	0.228	0.177	0.142	0.127	0.098	0.065	0.037	
December	0.229	0.176	0.147	0.125	0.093	0.059	0.034	

The 1st month for disposal by individuals on or after April 6, 1985 (April 1, 1985 for companies) as the month in which the disposal was incurred, or March 1982 where the expenditure was incurred before that month.

Poor, but honest, financial adviser

From Mr Philip R. Thomas
Sir, On reading Alan Jenkin's suggestion (*Letters*, December 6) that independent financial advisers only recommend products that pay the most commission, I began to wonder why I advise my clients, where appropriate, to put money into National Savings, Tessa, cash unit trusts, accessible cash accounts in bank and building societies (none of which pays commission) and studiously ignore those high-paying commission life offices which have neither the product nor the service to match my clients' needs.

Am I doing something wrong — or is my lack of aversion the reason why I live in a terraced house and remain debt-free but relatively poor? Yours faithfully,
PHILIP THOMAS,
Principal, Thomas Financial Planning,
439 Clock Face Road,
St Helens, Merseyside.

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SCHRODER Smaller Co's	+152%	+74%	+4%
M&G Income	+135%	+55%	+13%

Jupiter Income Trust compared with the top performing fully PEPable unit trusts over 5 years from the four largest unit trust management groups
Source: Mirocapital. Offer to bid, gross income reinvested, to 1.12.97.

It is consistent investment performance over time which will determine the value of your PEP.

As the table shows, over five years Jupiter's Income Trust has handsomely beaten the best-performing fully PEPable funds from each of the four largest unit trust PEP providers. It has also beaten the same funds over one and three years.

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Please send me further information on: Jupiter Income Trust The Jupiter PEP Jupiter Unit Trusts

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Clare Stewart makes financial resolutions for the coming year

Shape up for 1998 in body and wealth

By now the vow to start dieting, join a gym and read a novel a week may already be proving harder to keep than you had thought. But while you sweat on the rowing machine you may now be feeling so virtuous that you are ready for resolutions of a different kind.

Running a health check on the state of your finances could help you to improve the state of your wealth in 1998.

Remember that failure to act could prove more costly than reverting to the chocolate biscuit habit you have wrestled with for so many years.

ACT ON TAX: with the January 31 deadline looming be prepared to pay tax liabilities under self-assessment promptly. The end of the month is the deadline for both filing tax returns and paying what is due. If you file the return late or send it back incomplete you will get an automatic £100 fine.

If you do not pay up by January 31 interest will be charged on the tax owing at a rate of 9.5 per cent, with another 5 per cent surcharge levied if the money is still owing after 28 days.

CHRISTMAS EXCESS: it is not just a matter of joining a local health club, but also being prepared to deal with the financial impact of Christmas spending, especially when the credit cards bills hit.

As part of general financial planning it is worth sitting down to look at your income and expenditure and work out how best to pay off Christmas debts, says Mark Bolland from Chamberlain de Broe, the financial adviser.

For example, look at switching to a cheaper credit card, consolidating credit-card debts by taking out a loan or, if you have a hefty overdraft, consider converting it to a loan.

PROBLEM PRESENTS: items bought as Christmas presents and found to be faulty or of poor quality should be taken back to the shop promptly. If you hang on to them for too long, you may not be able to claim a full refund although you can have the fault put right. Don't forget also that the purchase insurance offered for goods bought on some credit cards only runs for 90 to 100 days.

HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE: does your contents policy provide adequate cover for your possessions particularly if you have received valuable Christmas gifts, or splashed out yourself at the January sales?

It is also the time of year when big freezes and burst pipes are common, so it is important to make sure you have adequate cover just in case of floods or any other unexpected problems.

REVIEW INSURANCE: have you adequate life insurance arranged? What about critical illness cover? It is all

too easy to put off making such decisions which involve the uncomfortable contemplation of death or serious illness.

But look ahead to the financial consequences for you and any dependants if, for example, you were unable to work because of serious illness, injury or disablement. What about private health insurance?

WILLPOWER: if you have not made a will, then it is never too soon to do so, particularly if you have dependants or if you have a partner but are not married. If you die intestate, then your partner may not be a beneficiary of your estate.

If you have made a will, it is worth reviewing its provisions frequently to make sure your family, friends or favourite charities are provided for.

It is also important to consider tax planning to minimise inheritance tax liabilities, particularly ahead of any changes to inheritance tax that are anticipated in the next Budget.

THINK CHARITABLY: if you support charities on a regular basis and are a taxpayer, think about setting up a deed of covenant so that your donation earns more for your favourite good cause. A covenanted donation qualifies for tax relief at your highest rate of tax. A deed of covenant lasts for at least three years. Alternatively tax relief is available on single donations under the gift aid provisions, and applies to gifts of £250 or more.

PENSION PLANNING: when was the last time you reviewed your pension provision?

If the amount of your monthly contribution has remained unchanged for some time or you are nearing retirement, talk to your pensions adviser to see whether you should be increasing premium payments or making an additional voluntary contribution (AVC).

Another way of combining tax efficiency with boosting your pension plan is by using up unused tax reliefs. This applies if you have not paid in the maximum allowable in previous years.

CHECK INVESTMENTS: look at your portfolio of investments regularly to assess how well they have performed. Do you want to diversify further or look for investments offering a higher return?

If you have built up a reasonably large portfolio but would value advice on its management, consider talking to a stockbroker or financial adviser who can also suggest how best to use tax allowances, such as putting money into Tassas or Peps while available and before the end of the current tax year.

Do not overlook options such as National Savings Certificates, says Maurice Parry-Wingfield, tax consultant at Deloitte & Touche. For example, a couple paying higher-

rate tax can put the maximum £10,000 in fixed and index-linked issues every time the interest rate changes which, says Mr Parry-Wingfield, means they could "build up a larger nest egg than under Issas and be just as tax efficient".

CHECK SAVINGS: look at savings accounts you may hold at building societies to check up current rates of interest, to see whether your money could be earning better returns elsewhere.

If it is an account you use infrequently, check also to see if the account terms and conditions have changed. Such alterations may mean your money drops into a band earning a lower rate of interest.

PLAN AHEAD: the end of the financial year is only a few months away so planning ahead can pay dividends. Make the most of allowances before the beginning of April. For example, make the most of

the capital gains tax allowance of £6,500 which can be claimed by a husband and wife each tax year.

Do not forget that you can also give gifts of £3,000 a year which are not subject to tax. This might well change in the Budget so, if you want to make gifts to family or friends, move quickly to take advantage of current tax allowances, and before the expected tightening of inheritance tax.

PREPARE FOR TAX 98: having sorted out tax returns due in at the end of January, make sure you keep all the relevant paperwork together for next year's tax.

Ensuring you have all the relevant paperwork such as tax deduction certificates from building society accounts comfortably ahead of the deadline saves that eleventh hour scramble to track down information and means you may get your return in to the Inland Revenue by September 30 so that they calculate the liability for you.



It is not just your body that needs a post-Christmas review — your finances are just as important as your waistline

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OFFSHORE FUND PERFORMANCE TO 3RD NOVEMBER 1997

	LAUNCH DATE	SINCE LAUNCH % CHANGE	POSITION IN SECTOR	5 YEARS % CHANGE
International Growth	25.1.83	+667.4	3 out of 17	+100.2
Emerging Companies	8.4.85	+750.9	1 out of 30	+135.9
American Growth	21.4.84	+1356.2	1 out of 12	+126.2
Far Eastern Growth	8.11.86	+336.9	1 out of 13	+68.8
Japanese Growth	30.11.91	+0.6	13 out of 72	+4.9
European Growth	8.11.86	+267.5	5 out of 6	+134.9
UK Growth	24.10.87	+418.3	1 out of 26	+176.4
Asian Smaller Markets	8.3.93	+40.6	8 out of 68	-
Latin American Growth	31.1.95	+25.4	21 out of 27	-

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TIM/C 03/01/98

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MARIANNE CURPHEY

Mutuals offer best rates, says survey

Mutual building societies, which have long argued that they offer the best rates for savers and borrowers, were vindicated this week after a new survey found that they charged the lowest mortgage repayment rates last year on standard home loans.

In research comparing banks and former building societies that floated on the stock market in 1997 with the mutuals, the latter emerged as the most competitive.

Building societies have long claimed that they are able to provide lower home loan rates and improved saving returns for investors compared with banks because, unlike their rivals, they do not have to pay dividends to shareholders.

The survey was carried out by Moneyfacts, a specialist publication in interest rate information, which found that standard variable rates for mortgages did vary considerably.

The Moneyfacts team found that a borrower with a £50,000 standard variable rate mortgage with Yorkshire Building Society paid total interest in 1997 of £3,632.52, the lowest repayment of the top 30 mortgage lenders.

The second lowest payment was charged by Bradford & Bingley Building Society at £3,712.37 and in third place was the Nationwide, the UK's

biggest society, at £3,747.11. Nationwide fought off carpetbaggers throughout 1997 in an attempt to stay mutual, although there are some analysts who believe that it will have a difficult job to stay independent in 1998.

All three building societies are staunchly committed to retaining their mutual status and say that the advantages of mutuality are apparent in the competitive rates offered to members.

Moneyfacts said the fourth cheapest provider was the Derbyshire Building Society, with a £3,752.79 total interest repayment, followed by Norwich & Peterborough Building Society with £3,753.52.

Third among the three most expensive mortgage providers with a £50,000 standard home loan were by Northern Rock, which earlier this year converted from a building society to bank status. Over 1997 it charged £3,956.06.

Birmingham Midshires Building Society, which is in the process of being taken over by the Bank of Ireland, was the second most expensive, with total interest payments of £3,970.92.

Bank of Ireland Mortgages was claimed by Moneyfacts to be the most expensive of the top 30 lenders, with interest charges of £3,998.93.

Draw off
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SITTING PRETTY? 54

Caroline Merrell on why windfall winners are feeling deflated

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How did your demutualisation stocks perform?

Time for the second-liners

If 1997 was the year of the megadeal, then 1998 will be the year when City analysts turn their attention to medium-sized companies and the minnows.

Stock market watchers believe that the UK's biggest companies are unlikely to show the same returns as last year. Instead, the shares of smaller and medium-sized companies are expected to catch up.

Despite the meteoric rises of the giants in the UK stock market, the performance of shares in smaller and medium-sized companies was far less dramatic.

Approximately 2,000 companies, with a market capitalisation of less than £350 million, underperformed the FTSE 100 index by 22 per cent. Over four years, smaller companies have trailed the FTSE 100 by 30 per cent.

The multibillion-pound deal was the hallmark of the UK market last year, as household names such as Guinness, Prudential, BT and BAT Industries went on a mergers and acquisitions spending spree.

The value of the deals reached nearly £64 billion, just falling short of the previous all-time record set in 1995. Two deals, the merger between Guinness and GrandMet, and the acquisition of Mercury Asset Management by Merrill Lynch, accounted for nearly £11 billion of the total.

BT, with its army of 2.3 million small shareholders, became embroiled in a £12 billion bid for MCL, the American telecoms giant.

The activity, reminiscent of the Eighties, helped to force up the share prices of the UK's 100 biggest companies. In particular, banking shares did extremely well. Shares in Lloyds TSB rose by more than 76 per cent over the year, even

Caroline Merrell asks the experts for their 1998 tips and finds smaller companies are favoured

though the bank itself did not swallow up any other major institution. Shares in other financial companies like Prudential, General Accident, Sun Life and Barclays, rose by more than 40 per cent over the year. The FTSE 100 increased by more than 22 per cent.

This week, Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, intimated that interest rates would have to rise again to stop the economy overheating.

Rising interest rates mean that the pound strengthens against other currencies, which in turn hits export-led companies - around 50 per cent of the profits of the top 100 companies are from overseas.

The turmoil in the Far East is also likely to take its toll on exporters. The devaluations of the Malaysian, Korean and Indonesian currencies will make exports from this area of the world around a third cheaper than the home-grown alternatives.

Some, though not all, commentators also believe that the current bull run in banking shares is over. Profits in the sector have been generated by wider margins behind the rates paid out on deposits and those charged to borrowers.

Margins could substantially narrow this year, as competition between the former building societies, banks and the mutual societies begins to intensify.

The Times asked some City experts for their tips for the year ahead.

Damian Larkin, The Share Centre.

"Asian economies and their effect on UK and Western markets and companies still outweigh heavily for the first quarter. It is likely to be the dominant theme throughout this period and quite possibly for the first half and beyond. Cheap Far Eastern imports mean that the key risk to the UK market is now deflationary, not inflationary.

"Favourite stocks for 1998 include Glaxo Wellcome. We are positive about the pharmaceutical sector generally, including SmithKline and Zeeva.

"A bank with the size, financial strength and reputation of HSBC should be able to expand its market share. However, HSBC is not for those with a delicate constitution. For the brave long-term investors, the share may well reap rewards. BAT and Tesco are also favoured.

"On smaller companies, Videologic, Verity, Freepages, Lavendon Group, Grantchester, First Bus and Robert Wiseman Dairies, are favoured by the company.

"We like First Bus, because it is in an excellent sector with government policy behind it. It has done very well in diversifying its spread of revenue. It is a smaller version of National Express."

Graham Hooper, Chase de Vere.

"Eddie George's comments about the economy and a possible increase in interest rates will be even worse news

The windfall experience



Edwin Duncombe, an equity research editor, believes he did the right thing selling his Halifax shares shortly after receiving them in June. He got a price of 737p for his 200 shares, giving him £147,400 or slightly more than he would have obtained if he had sold in the Halifax-arranged auction (Patrick Collinson writes).

"I reckoned that financial stocks had already had a very good run so I didn't think it was a bad time to sell," said Mr Duncombe. Investors who held on to their Halifax shares saw them slide downhill for most of 1997, falling to a low of 663p on November 13. In December they rebounded, but they have still to rise above their launch price.

How did your windfall shares fare in 1997? And what is the outlook for 1998? Turn to page 56 for a Weekend Money guide.

for exporters. This will be detrimental for the FTSE 100 stocks." Mr Hooper believes that UK smaller and medium-sized companies will be the better performers next year. He recommends smaller companies funds from Schroders, Credit Suisse and Fidelity. These trusts are run by Jim Cox, Bill Mott and Anthony Bolton, respectively, all highly-rated fund managers.

Jason Hollands, BES Investment.

Mr Hollands pointed out that the UK stock market last year played into the hands of the index-tracking funds - the active fund managers underperformed. This year, he believes, the situation will be reversed. Instead highly fo-

cusated funds will provide the best performance. He said: "I would recommend Jupiter's special situations fund and its high income fund." Schroder Enterprise and Gartmore's UK capital growth are also recommended by Mr Hollands.

This latter fund invests in a cross-section of UK shares - 20 per cent is in smaller companies.

Tim Gregory, Gartmore.

"We think that quality defensive companies will outperform. We like the life insurance sector. We think that there will be further consolidation in the sector." He believes that banks may not continue to show the same level of returns. Gartmore also

believes that smaller companies will begin to dominate. The company's Gervaise Williams said: "Smaller companies had a miserable year last year. Going forward, 14 per cent earnings growth is expected in the small caps, compared to 7 per cent in the bigger companies."

He also believes that smaller companies will be subject to more takeovers. Last year saw a rash of takeovers of UK smaller companies by foreign buyers, including St James Beach Hotels, Eurodollar, Inspirations and Kingsbury.

Companies he favours include Proudfoot, a £29 million management consultancy company, and the Skills Group, a company that sells IT training services.

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Policyholders poised to share stock market joy



Higher terminal bonuses could mean a summer cruise for some investors

Life offices will come under the spotlight next week when they begin handing out bonuses to their with-profit policyholders after a year of spectacular returns for the UK stock market.

Some in the life assurance industry are predicting that for ten-year contracts, the payouts could rise by as much as 5 per cent.

Traditionally, life companies choose January to declare bonuses for the previous calendar year, and General Accident will be the first to unveil the new bonuses, on Monday.

Beale Dobie, which trades in second-hand with-profit endowment policies, claims that there is "no justification" for any reduction in maturity payouts for ten-year and 25-year with-profits contracts, unless last year's payments were too high.

However, gloomy predictions at the beginning of 1997 from leading industry players such as Standard Life mean that rises are not automatically guaranteed. Standard Life gave warning last January that rates might continue to fall for the next couple of years across the industry as a whole.

David Beale, joint chief executive of Beale Dobie, predicts that terminal bonuses on 25-year contracts will fall at General Accident and Royal Life, while Friends Provident and Scottish Life will remain unaltered.

He said: "As far as 25-year contracts are concerned, the payouts have moved very little over the last five years and this year's exceptional investment returns should ensure that once again there is little change."

Mr Beale believes that Norwich Union, Commercial Union, Sun Alliance, National Provident and Standard Life will increase their terminal bonus rates.

He said: "In all cases, we expect little or no change to reversionary bonus rates, which we believe to be at sustainable levels in relation to current investment conditions."

Payouts on ten-year contracts have, on average, dropped by about 25 per cent during the 1990s. Mr Beale believes that this year could well see a reversal. He said: "We believe that some companies had overpaid in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but most are now back in line with underlying asset values."

"An average increase in payouts of up to 5 per cent is expected by Beale Dobie and this will mean that there will have to be an increase in terminal bonus rates for ten-year contracts."

MARIANNE CURPHEY

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